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EDITORS

Pratyoush Onta
Nepal Studies Group, Kathmandu

Mary Des Chene
Nepal Studies Group, Kathmandu

Mark Liechty
University of Illinois at Chicago

Mandala Book Point
Kathmandu, Nepal

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Notes on Contributors

Mary Des Chene is an editor of *Studies in Nepali History and Society*, a member of the South Asia Council of the Association for Asian Studies, and a researcher. Recent writings include an article on the campaign against proposed anti-terrorist legislation, published in English in the *Himalayan Research Bulletin* (1998, Vol. 18, No. 2) and in Nepali in *Studies in Nepali History and Society* (1999, Vol. 4, No. 1). She is currently working on translations of memoir essays for an upcoming issue of *Manoa* featuring Nepali literature.

Bhaskar Gautam is an undergraduate student at Tribhuvan University. He provides administrative support to Martin Chautari and has been involved in various research projects since early 1998.

C.K. Lal is a civil engineer/urban planner who works with HMG/Nepal. His vocation is commentary upon contemporary issues through written and spoken words. His columns regularly appear in Nepali and English language newspapers of Nepal including the *Independent* and *Himalaya Times*.

Bernardo A. Michael is a Ph.D. Candidate in South Asian History at the University of Hawaii at Manoa. His thesis on the Anglo-Gorkha war of 1814-16 is based on archival research in India, Nepal and the U.K. An article entitled, "European Explorers on the Anglo-Gorkha Frontier: 'Faskirap Saheb's' Mission to Gorkha, 1783" is forthcoming in *Contributions to Nepalese Studies*.

Judith Pettigrew is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Health Studies at the University of Central Lancashire, UK where she teaches medical anthropology. She is also a Research Associate at the University of Cambridge and is a Co-Director of the Kohla Project for Archaeology and Ethno-History.

Yarjung Tamu is a Tamu (Gurung) shaman and indigenous expert. He is a Co-Director of the Kohla Project for Archaeology and Ethno-History, a Research Associate at the University of Cambridge and Director of the Tamu Pye Lhu Sangh Museum in Pokhara.

Manjushree Thapa writes fiction and non-fiction based on Nepal. She obtained a Master's of Fine Arts degree in Creative Writing from the University of Washington, Seattle, USA. *A Leaf in a Begging Bowl*, a collection of Ramesh Vikal's stories selected and translated by her, is due to be published by Mandala Book Point in Spring 2000. Together with Samrat Upadhyay she is editing an upcoming issue of *Manoa: A Pacific Journal of International Writing* that will feature Nepali literature in translation. She is also a convenor of Martin Chautari.

STATEMAKING AND SPACE ON THE MARGINS OF EMPIRE: RETHINKING THE ANGLO-GORKHA WAR OF 1814-1816

Bernardo A. Michael

1. Introduction

In November 1814 war broke out between the English East India Company and the Himalayan state of Gorkha following recurring disputes over their respective rights to control territory and collect revenue from lands straddling their common frontier.[1] This war, often referred to as the "Anglo-Nepal" war, came to an end in March 1816 with the defeat of Gorkha and the signing of the treaty of Sugauli. One notable fallout of this war was that for the first time a well-defined linear boundary was demarcated to separate the territories of the two states.

The war itself has been the object of considerable scholarly investigation. Some writers have explained away this event in terms of cause and effect—revealing the causes that underlay the war, the subsequent defeat of the "Nepalis", and the effects on Nepal. Pronouncements about causes have ranged from "policies of joint expansion" and Gorkhali "encroachment" to the aggressive expansionist designs of the English (Rana 1970; Husain 1970:36; Regmi 1975). One writer lists as many as fourteen causes that led to the outbreak of war between the two states (Rana 1970:26-37).

Such accounts have invariably assumed strong nationalist overtones. Some of the nationalist accounts of the war present the case of a helpless Nepal pitted against the imperial might of the East India Company. D. R. Regmi, for instance, observes that no matter what "Nepal" did, the country could not have avoided conflict because of the aggressive expansionist designs of the English (Regmi 1975:291). Rishikesh Shaha, on the other hand, argues that "it was the issue of sovereignty over these two territories (Butwal and Sheoraj) that proved to be the immediate cause of the war between Nepal and British India in 1814 (Shaha 1990:108). More recently, one Nepali writer has attempted to re-examine the Anglo-

1 The English East India Company will be referred to hereafter by the term 'the Company'.

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Gorkha war in terms of the Treaty of Sugauli which was signed at two different times (December 2, 1815 and March 4, 1816).[2] The argument opaquely seems to suggest that the treaty negotiations and signing were performed under murky circumstances. The dubious role of Gorkhali negotiators, the duplicity of the British and the discrepancies between the two treaties, rendered the whole process an unconstitutional one (Thapa 2048 v.s.).

Still others have tried to provide narrative histories of the war, consisting of profiles of the main engagements, military tactics, personalized accounts of generalship and fighting garnished with tales of bravery, courage and honour (Pemble 1971; Khanduri 1997; Pant 2021v.s., 2022v.s., 2023v.s.). In these works one can find detailed event-histories of the war that make informative and interesting reading in many places. The works of *Saṁśodan Maṇḍal* historians such as the Pants are particularly rich in source materials that are otherwise hard to come by today. The historian Ludwig F. Stiller, while making largely similar claims is more sophisticated and attributes the war to the felt needs of the British to rationalize their administration and of the Gorkhalis to control the agrarian and forest resources of the Tarai.[3]

Stiller, however, is deeply committed to writing a "nationalist" history when he notes that one of the consequences of the war was that it gave the Nepalis a psychic shock . The "silent years" (from the end of the war in 1816 to Bhim Sen Thapa's death in 1839) were a period of anguish where the cry of village Nepal and the needs of the "nation" went unheard (Stiller 1976:26). On quite another front, a number of Indian scholars have placed the war within a wider diplomatic perspective of unfolding "Anglo-Nepalese" relations (e.g., Mojumdar 1973; Chaudhuri 1960; Sanwal 1965). In these accounts, Anglo-Gorkha relations in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries have been viewed in terms of sequences of embassies, wars, military expeditions and treaties.

While these renditions of the war are not irrelevant, they are largely event-based accounts of military action, diplomatic maneuverings and

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2 The Anglo-Gorkha War concluded with the signing of the Treaty of Sugauli. A treaty was originally concluded with Gorkhali envoys in December 1815, but ratified by the court at Kathmandu only in March 1816.

3 The term *tarai* refers to the then thickly forested plains that stretched across the foothills of the Himalaya, all the way across the breadth of present-day Nepal. In contemporary records (English and Gorkhali) this region is often referred to as the '*tarriani*'.

nationalist sentiment. They tend to treat the Anglo-Gorkha war as the simple outcome of the clash of two received orders ("British" and "Nepali"). Such a view invariably generates simple sequences of cause and effect. What these studies fail to detect and map are other strands of meaning and practice that went into the production of the war and whose consequences lay elsewhere. My effort will be to elude the direction taken by previous accounts of the war, by giving greater analytic attention to some of the unstudied moments and nuances of the war. In order to achieve this, my paper is informed by a number of concerns.

One of the central concerns of this paper is to understand processes of statemaking on the Anglo-Gorkha frontier prior to the outbreak of war in 1814. By statemaking I mean those processes that mark the production of state-society relationships. Such processes are not uniform in their manifestation. Regional variations mark the production of such relationships, driven by different temporalities and diverse accommodations can be detected in what is often subsumed as a single trend in state building processes (Sivaramakrishnan 1997). Such regional variations have often been obscured in the military, diplomatic and nationalist accounts of the war. In order to gain greater insight into the particularities of statemaking this paper therefore restricts itself in geographic scope to a study of only that portion of the Anglo-Gorkha frontier that separated the districts of Champaran (in the North Indian state of Bihar) and Rautahat (in present day Nepal). I refer to this area as the Champaran-*tarriani* frontier (see Map 1).[4]

This paper is also informed by a concern for processuality. This means that a study of processes of statemaking through the Anglo-Gorkha war does not begin with the assumption of a received order. In a processual approach, continuity and change have comparable theoretical standing. As Sally Falk Moore puts it,

> process conveys an analytic emphasis on continuous production and construction without differentiating in that respect between repetition

4 I use the term *'tarriani'* to echo the use of this indigenous term in both Company and Gorkhali records. For this paper, the Champaran-*tarriani* frontier signifies that stretch of forested low land that separated the northern boundary of Champaran district from the foothills to its north. In 1814 it straddled the districts of Champaran and the Eastern Tarai. This strip of territory was carved for fiscal purposes into a number of divisions and sub-divisions referred to as *parganās*, *ṭappās* and *mauzās* usually (though not always) in descending order. For details of Gorkhali activities in the *tarriani* during this period see, Naraharinath (2022v.s.:7-11).

> and innovation. A process approach does not proceed from the idea of a received order that is then changed. Process is simply a time oriented perspective on both continuity and change (Moore 1987:729; cf. Moore 1994).

In this sense, events such as the Anglo-Gorkha war cannot be understood as mere exemplifications of "British" or "Gorkhali" culture. Rather, when viewed within larger unfolding sequences of actions, the war provides a diagnosis of the simultaneous reproduction and transformation of (spatial) structures and of attempts to create new ones.[5] In this case, the structures that were being gradually dismantled and created anew centered around the organization and knowledge of the geography of both states. And these processes unfolded unevenly across both states. In other words, I suggest that the disputes and colonial investigations that preceded the outbreak of the war actually encoded struggles over the geographical construction of the state.

Finally, this paper is also motivated by a concern for issues of spatiality. Of late, issues of space have been receiving considerable analytic attention across disciplines (e.g., de Certeau 1984; Foucault 1980; Lefebvre 1991; Soja 1989; Gupta and Ferguson 1997). The emphasis has been to move away from treatments of space as some neutral container or stage on which the performances of everyday life are enacted. Rather, current theorization stresses the socially produced

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5 My treatment here of events such as the Anglo-Gorkha war closely approximates Sally Falk Moore's notion of a "diagnostic event". Moore notes that, "An event is not necessarily best understood as the exemplification of an extant symbolic or social order. Events may equally be evidence of the ongoing dismantling of structures or of attempts to create new ones...the kind of event that should be privileged is one that reveals ongoing contests and conflicts and competitions and the efforts to prevent, suppress, or repress these...there are certain kinds of incidents, one might call them 'diagnostic events', which have a strong likelihood of exposing such information" (Moore 1987:729-30). Again she notes that, "...there is no single order of things, no single *episteme* through which the Chagga [an East African people living on Mount Kilimanjaro] understand the world...Instead there are many. Nor is there any single mode of knowing that informs the anthropologist. This circumstance is the justification for arguing that certain kinds of events are particularly important forms of diagnostic data. Within their content they display multiple meanings in *combination*...the juxtaposition in events of competing and contrary ideas, and of actions having contradictory consequences, is the circumstance that requires inspection and analysis" (1987:735, emphasis in original).

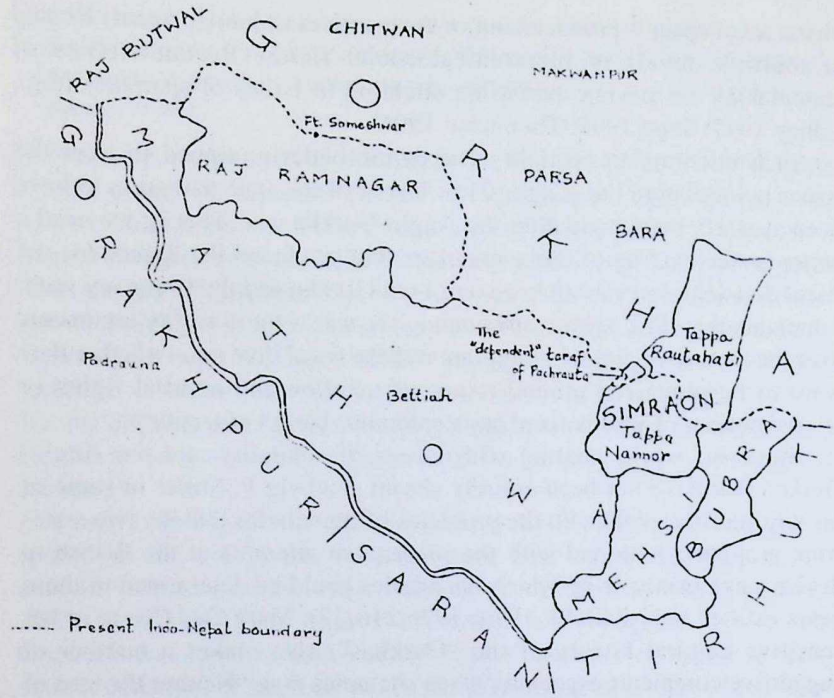
character of space—produced out of the practices of human agents located at multiple levels in hierarchical social fields. Recent studies of statemaking are paying increasing attention to issues of spatiality (e.g., Edney 1997; Scott 1998; Thongchai 1994).

Such attention to spatiality leaves me better equipped to treat the issues pertaining to the geographical layout of the state that seem to have been at work, before and after the Anglo-Gorkha war. That is, we need a better understanding of those practices that produced the spaces (or the fiscal divisions and sub-divisions) of both Gorkha and the Company state. I maintain that the disputes surrounding the war were in reality arguments over the right to organize and represent these fiscal divisions–whether they were to be organized around issues of taxation and tenurial rights or around notions of well-defined and continuous blocks of territory.

However, works dealing with issues of spatiality and the Anglo-Gorkha war have not been entirely absent. Ludwig F. Stiller in some of his writings does deal with the problems of boundaries that the two states were grappling with and with the subsequent attempts of the British to devise some principle by which boundaries could be determined in these years (Stiller 1973:240-47; 1974; 1976:216-27). Mary Des Chene in her sensitive cultural history of the "Gurkhas", also makes a number of suggestive comments especially when she notes that, "Neither the idea of connected territory nor the concept of a 'line of frontier' entered into the Gorkhali understanding of possessions" (Des Chene 1991:25-33, see especially p. 30). Earlier, Richard Burghart in a pioneering article discussed how multiple readings of space marked the relationships between ruler, land and the people in Gorkha (Burghart 1984). Burghart clearly reveals how these multiple readings were progressively reordered to produce the current conception of the nation-state in Nepal. I wish to pursue lines of inquiry opened by these scholars by exploring the impress of political, fiscal and social relationships on the layout of pre-colonial fiscal divisions on the Champaran-*tarriani* frontier.

2. The Anglo Gorkha War and the Production of Space on the Champaran-tarriani Frontier

In 1814 when the war broke out, the Champaran-*tarriani* frontier had become an illegible landscape. Illegible landscapes are the product of certain moments of statemaking when, in certain areas, the centralizing thrust of a state is blunted by local forces. In such areas central authorities find it difficult to impose order, collect taxes and exact compliance. Local forces need not necessarily be unified to achieve this effect; they may



Map 1: The Champaran-Tarriani Frontier, 1800 A.D., showing fiscal divisions. This map is not drawn to scale. (Mapwork by S. Michael)

themselves be internally divided. On the Champaran-*tarriani* frontier, such processes had been unfolding since the advent of the authority of both Gorkha and the Company in the latter half of the eighteenth century. The attempts of both states to put into place institutional arrangements for the efficient collection of revenue, to acquire accurate knowledge of these areas, and to exact compliance from their subjects had met with limited success. Moreover, a number of villages all along this frontier had become the focus of local disputes, which in turn had become the subject of investigations by both states.

The Company's official investigations conducted between 1812-1814 examined in considerable detail the issues surrounding major disputes that broke out along two sections of the Anglo-Gorkha frontier: the Champaran-*tarriani* and the Gorakhpur-Butwal sections. But it should be realized that disputes in these two regions were part of a larger pool of disputes that seem to have revolved around as many as 200 villages all

along the Anglo-Gorkha frontier. In 1814 the Anglo-Gorkha frontier stretched from the river Sutlej in the west to the river Tista in the east. It is also possible that many disputes might have gone unreported, having crystallized and dissolved within highly localized contexts of culture, power and history. What is clear is that the disputes in the Butwal and Eastern Tarai areas formed a part of a wider body of practices whose implications were deeply spatial.

In the sections that follow, I endeavor to locate the practices that came together to produce the pre-colonial fiscal divisions (such as *ṭappās* and *parganās*) that straddled the Champaran-*tarriani* frontier.[6] I argue that these practices rendered fluid, discontinuous, and deeply entangled the spatial layout and edges of these fiscal divisions. The Anglo-Gorkha war was a struggle over the right to represent and produce the geography of these divisions.

Ṭappā Rautahat, *Parganā* (Gaḍh) Simraon

The Nepali historian Baburam Acharya's statement that "Rautahat zillā was referred to as a *parganā* because of its very low population" is a misleading one (Acharya 2022v.s.:81). Rautahat, in terms of contemporary fiscal discourse was a *ṭappā*, one of the two that made up the *parganā* of (*Gadh*) Simraon. The other *ṭappā* was Nannor and it lay in Champaran.[7]

It was over the rights to possess certain villages falling on the boundary of *ṭappās* Rautahat and Nannor of *parganā* (Gaḍh) Simraon that a number of disputes broke out between the two states in 1812. It would

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6 The nomenclature of the pre-colonial fiscal divisions on the Champaran-*tarriani* frontier followed the pattern that had for long been followed under the Mughals. The Mughals divided their empire into provinces (*subās*) which were further sub-divided into *chaklas*, *sarkārs*, *parganās*, *ṭappās*, *tarāfs* and *mauzās*, usually (though not always) in descending order. For instance, the *subā* of Bihar was divided into a number of *sarkārs*, of which Champaran was one. *Sarkār* Champaran was further divided into a number of *parganās* which were then further subdivided into a number of *ṭappās*. Gorkha's Eastern Tarai was also divided into a number of *zillās* or districts which were further divided into *parganās* and *mauzās*, in descending order.

7 While Company records use the nomenclature '*parganā* Simraon', Gorkhali records use the term '*parganā* Gaḍh Simraon'. The use of these terms also indicates that practices of fiscal organization and administration in Gorkha's Eastern Tarai drew heavily from the existing pool of practices, technologies and terminology devised by the Mughals in the previous century.

appear that at least twenty-two villages had become disputed at this time. However, before we turn to those disputes, it will be useful to examine the circumstances surrounding the Company's granting of *ṭappā* Rautahat to Gorkha in 1783. This will not only reveal a layer of tenurial rights and practices that went into the production of *ṭappā* Rautahat but, more significantly, will reveal the spatial impress of these practices–rendering the *ṭappā* a shifting and blurred space.

In the early eighteenth century *parganā* (Gaḍh) Simraon was composed of at least two *ṭappās*, Nannor and Rautahat.[8] Between 1742-1783, there were a number of rearrangements in the fiscal relationships that concerned this *parganā* that merit further investigation. Prior to 1743, Rautahat would appear to have formed part of the *tarriani* possessions of the hill kingdom of Makwanpur.

The conquest of Makwanpur by Gorkha in 1762 rendered problematic the status of *ṭappā* Rautahat and its dependent *tarāf* of Pachrauta.[9] The *tappā* was claimed by Bir Kishor Singh, the *rājā* of Bettiah and by one Mirza Abdulla Beg in addition to the *rājā* of Gorkha. While Bir Kishor argued that *ṭappā* Rautahat was an integral part of his estate, the Mirza claimed the *ṭappā* on the basis of a *birtā*(?) or an inheritable tax free grant given to his maternal grandfather Qulb Ali Beg by Hem Karna Sen, the erstwhile *rājā* of Makwanpur.[10]

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8 Simraon was a very old *parganā* and finds mention in the sixteenth century work of Abul Fazl, the *Ain-i-Akbari* (see H. S. Jarrett 1949:167). Simraon was the site of an ancient fort (*gaḍh*), established probably in the fourteenth century. The fort was destroyed by an invading Muslim army in the fourteenth century. See, Miscellaneous Extracts from Dr. Buchanan's Travels, Mss. Eur D639, pp. 19-26, *OIOC, BL*. The name Simraon might have come from the Bhojpuri word *simr*, which stands for the *simal* tree (*bombax malabaricum*). It is possible that the fort was located within a dense jungle of *simal* trees (Koirala 1988:22).

9 A *tarāf* is a fiscal subdivision belonging to a *parganā* or *ṭappā* and includes several villages.

10 The actual status of this grant too was disputed. The *rājās* of Bettiah had for long contested the claims of Makwanpur (and later Gorkha) to this *ṭappā*. And they would lay claim to it as late as 1816, over 33 years after it had been formally handed over to Gorkha by the East India Company. See *arzi* (petition) of the Bettiah *rājā*, Bir Kishor Singh to Lt. Colonel Paris Bradshaw dated 24 August, 1816 in *F.S. Procs.* August 24 1816, no. 18, *NAI*. Gorkha's officials would allege that this grant was not a *birtā* grant, but a *jagir* grant (land granted in lieu of cash salary), and therefore open to resumption. They claimed that the copper grant produced by the Beg was a forgery.

The year was 1743 A.D.[11] Hem Karna Sen's *syāhāmohar* (royal document) was inscribed in copper and read thus:

> Whereas, I have given the *parganā* of Simraon together with the *ṭappās* Rautahat, Butkee(?) etc. in all seven *tarāfs* cultivated and desolate to Mirza Kulb Ali Beg, son of Ali Quli Khan including the [? illegible in original], *māl* [revenue due to the state], *jalkar* [tax due on water based resources], *bankar* [tax on forest products], and *sayer* [customs and excise dues], as long as I and my descendants shall be in possession of my *rāj*, so long let this engagement be in force, and whilst both parties enjoy the revenues, let good faith be preserved between them. Dated, 1800 [v.s.], the first day of the moon's increase, Bhadau. *Mokam* [camp] Hariharpur.[12]

From 1743-1783, the status of *tappā* Rautahat underwent many changes. From the very outset, the *rājā* of Bettiah disputed Ali Quli Khan's claim to Rautahat. This dispute continued till 1753/54 when Ali Quli Khan—probably unable to ignore the power of the Bettiah *rājā*—obtained a *sanad* (royal decree) from the Bettiah *rājā* Dhrub Singh (r. 1715-1762) himself. This *sanad* confirmed Ali Quli Khan's right to Rautahat. But there was one crucial difference, which also explains why the Bettiah *rājā* was willing to confirm Ali Quli Khan's right to *tappā* Rautahat. *Rājā* Dhrub Singh's grant was a highly symbolic act that rearranged his relationship to both Rautahat and Ali Quli Khan. Dhrub Singh did not give the *sanad* as a confirmation of the Makwani grant issued by Hem Karna Sen. Rather, under a *sanad* from himself he confirmed Ali Quli's right. By doing so, Dhrub Singh was not relinquishing his right to Rautahat, but

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11 The original grant was instituted as a reward to Mirza Abdulla Beg's maternal grandfather, Ali Quli Khan. He, as *amil* (revenue collector) of Tirhut, had assisted Hem Karna Sen the *rājā* of Makwanpur when he was attacked by one Kanak Singh the *diwan* (head of the revenue department) of [? illegible in original]. At this time Hem Karna Sen had also sought assistance from Dhrub Singh the *rājā* of Bettiah who subsequently refused. Ali Quli Khan then raised 20,000 men and rendered valuable assistance to Hem Karna Sen. Following this victory, Hem Karna Sen came down to Bara and conferred this grant to Ali Quli Khan. See, Procs. of the Governor-General-in-Council in Bengal (*PGGCB*), 28 September 1781, Consl. 1-3. *WBSA*.

12 *PGGCB*, 28 September 1781, Consl. 2. *WBSA*. The tenor of the grant clearly suggests that it was free from revenue obligations and inheritable, that is, a *bikh birtā* grant.

only *confirming* it, while at the same time displaying his tenurial superiority in conferring it to Ali Quli Khan.[13]

In this fashion, from the Bettiah *rājā's* perspective, the relationship between *tappā* Rautahat, the Beg's family and the *rājā* himself was reconstituted. The Beg's family now held Rautahat in *jāgir* (land held by government officials in lieu of a cash salary) as dependents of Dhrub Singh. That is, Dhrub Singh's *zamīndārī* right was superior to the *jāgirdārī* right conferred on the Beg.[14] *Jāgir* lands being granted to government officials in lieu of a cash salary could be resumed at the pleasure of the grantor. This meant that the Bettiah *rājā* could resume the *tappā* of Rautahat at will.[15] In this manner, the Bettiah *rājā* seems to have consolidated his tenurial claim to the *tappā* of Rautahat.

Between 1760-1764, Ali Quli Khan and his family were imprisoned by Mir Kasim, the *nawāb* (ruler) of Bengal. *Tappā* Rautahat passed into the *nawāb's* hands and later Jugal Kishor, now the *rājā* of Bettiah (r. 1762-1783), seized control of *tappā* Rautahat and its dependency of Pachrauta.[16]

Ali Quli Khan family seem to have resisted this move. Sometime in 1765 they obtained a *parwaṇa* (official order) from one Kasim Ali Khan, the *subbā* (viceroy) of Rajmahal, addressed to the officers of Champaran desiring them to leave the *tappā* of Rautahat and its dependent *taraf* of Pachrauta in the possession of Ali Quli Khan according to the copper plate grant in his favor from the former *rājā* of Makwanpur. The *parwaṇa* made the observation that the said fiscal units were *khārij* or struck off the

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13 Series of letters and Papers with Persian Secretary John Monckton's report on them relating to the Nepal-British Border Disputes in Champaran, in *FP*, Procs. 4 March 1814, Consl. 53-65, pp. 195-434, *NAI*. Hereafter, referred to as the *Monckton Report*. See also, Report of Jonathan Duncan, Preparer of Reports in the Revenue Department, dated 6 October, 1783, in *PGGCB (Revenue Department)*, 11 November 1783, no. 55, pp. 2350-2363, *WBSA*. Hereafter, referred to as the *Duncan Report*.

14 A *zamīndār* is a landlord or person authorized to collect revenue.

15 In fact, the witnesses produced by *rājā* Bir Kishor Singh to stake his claim to the proprietorship of Rautahat would assert that the Beg was a dependent *jāgirdār* of *rājā* Jugal Kishor who ultimately dismissed the Beg. See testimonies of Sheikh Ziauddin and Har Lal Singh, *Monckton Report*.

16 I have no information as to whether Mir Kasim gave *ṭappā* Rautahat to Jugal Kishor or the latter took control of it following Mir Kasim's defeat by the British in 1764. Jugal Kishor himself seems to have resisted Mir Kasim, but may have later entered into a compromise with the *nawāb* that enabled him to regain Bettiah. This compromise agreement, if it did actually transpire, must have taken place in 1764.

records of the *sadr* (central) *quanungo's* of Bihar and thereby independent of the *nizāmat* (government). *Tappā* Rautahat and its dependencies were for all fiscal purposes to be treated as dependencies of Makwanpur.

Between 1765- 1770, Ali Quli Khan and his successor Mirza Abdulla Beg obtained a number of *parwaṇas* that would confirm their grants in Rautahat and Pachrauta. One of these *parwaṇas* was issued by Mir Jafar, *nawāb* of Bengal in 1765. Mir Jafar's *parwaṇa* also addressed Jugal Kishor Singh, the Bettiah *rājā*, asking him to reinstate Ali Quli Khan's family. The other *parwaṇas* were issued by one Saif-ul-mulk-Saif-ud-daula-Saiyid Najibat Ali Khan Bahadur Shehamat Jang in 1765, *Mahārājā* Shitab Rai the *diwān* or head of the revenue department at Patna in 1770, and Edward Golding, English Supravisor at Saran in 1770.[17] These orders confirmed Mirza Abdulla Beg's special relationship with *tappā* Rautahat and *taraf* Pachrauta and the fact of their being struck off the records of the province of Bihar.

This is interesting and worth dwelling on. In contemporary revenue discourse, such terms as *khārij* were commonly used to indicate that some item had been struck off from a particular heading in the accounts. Often this would refer to the status of *māphī* (rent free) lands. Since such lands were not expected to remit revenue to government they were struck off from the account registers recording the details of *māl* (revenue) yielding lands. Such fiscal representations and practices rarely respected the spatial coherence of a fiscal unit. In this fashion, bits and pieces of a *tappā* or *parganā* could be separated in a highly irregular or discontinuous fashion. They could also become the subjects of dispute. Company officials, often insensitive to such representations and practices and their spatial implications would react with shock when claims were made to such patches of territory, lying within the Company's own dominions.

Such an instance occurred on the Gorakhpur-Butwal frontier. In 1812 the Gorkhalis would lay claim to half of *tappā* Mirchwar (*parganā* Binayakpur, in Gorakhpur district) on the ground that the concerned lands had been given on a *maphī* (rent free) tenure by the *nawāb* of Awadh to the *rājā* of Butwal. Since the Butwal *raj* had been incorporated into Gorkha in 1804, the Gorkhalis now claimed these lands. The Gorkhalis while admitting the right of the Company to collect revenue from the *parganā* of Binayakpur, felt that this right did not extend to the *māphī* lands of the

17 For details, see the *Duncan Report* (1783); the *Monckton Report* (1814); *PGGCB*, 28 September, 1781, Consl. 1-3, *WBSA*; *PGGCB*, 1781. Press List Index, vol. 9, 6 March-18 December 1781, pp. 111-112, *WBSA*.

Butwal *rājās*, which had been separated from the *māl* accounts of the *parganā*. This came as a rude shock to Company authorities who claimed the entire *parganā* as it belonged the ceded district of Gorakhpur.[18]

The Company was unwilling to recognize claims to bits and pieces of this territory. Ironically, the logic of the arguments being made by the Gorkhalis on the Gorakhpur-Butwal frontier in 1812 was denied by them to Mirza Abdulla Beg nearly thirty years earlier on the Champaran-*tarriani* frontier. Such contradictions are invariably the product of the shifting configurations of culture, power and history that inform strategies of resource control. Accounts of statemaking on the Anglo-Gorkha frontier during this period must recognize the negotiated and contingent character of such strategies of resource control.

But to return to *tappā* Rautahat: Even in 1765 as the Beg's family was seeking to assert its claims to Rautahat, the *tappā* continued to grow! In 1765 we know that the Beg's family had rented ten villages in *tappā* Nannor (lying on its common border with *tappā* Rautahat) from Jugal Kishor Singh the *rājā* of Bettiah. In 1767 following Jugal Kishor's expulsion from the region by British forces, the Beg's family quietly added these ten villages to the *tappā* of Rautahat.[19] Such practices of sequestering of villages from one *tappā* to another has tremendous spatial implications, especially if the villages concerned are not contiguous to each other.

When such non-contiguous villages were added to the fiscal resources of a division, then the contours of that division could be rendered spatially discontinuous. Or as British officials would put it—it would give rise to the phenomenon of intermixture. Such spatial discontinuity/intermixture was generated by the practices of various agents who were jockeying for positions of resource control. The presence of a new source of authority, such as the Gorkhalis, could only have further aggravated the situation and engendered dispute and conflict. When *tappā* Rautahat was given to

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18 It might be recalled that according to the Treaty of 1801, the Company had been ceded the entire district of Gorakhpur by the *nawāb* of Awadh. Further details about the disputes on the Gorakhpur-Butwal frontier can be found in Chapter 4 of my dissertation (Michael n.d.).

19 See, "List of the villages in the Tuppeh of Nunnour, Purgunnah Simraon, Surcar Chumparun as taken from a document under the seal of Cazee Noorulhuk, 1173 Fuslee, being 48 years old" in Paris Bradshaw, Political Agent on the Nepal Frontier, *FP*, Procs. 25 March 1814, pp. 625-631, *NAI*. Bradshaw gives the names of only 9 villages leaving the 10th one unknown.

Gorkha in 1783, these 10 villages also fell into Gorkhali hands and continued to be sequestered from the *tappā* of Nannor. In this manner, villages could move back and forth between various pre-colonial fiscal divisions registering a fluidity in the landscape.

But there is more to this complicated story. It appears that sometime between 1762 and 1781 the Beg's family got their claim to *tappā* Rautahat confirmed by the Gorkhali government (at Kathmandu?). In 1813, during the course of the Company's investigations into the disputes in this area, Gorkhali officials such as *Kājī* Randip Singh and *Sardār* Parshuram Thapa would assert that following Makwanpur's conquest by Gorkha in 1762, Mirza Abdulla Beg the "*jāgirdār*" of Rautahat got his *jāgir* confirmed by authorities at Kathmandu.[20] This was also confirmed in the deposition of Bikha Chaudhari, the Tharu leader in the area, who claimed that the Beg's grant was confirmed by Prithvinarayan Shah in 1770. *Kājī* Randip Singh and *Sardār* Parshuram Thapa further added that sometime around 1781 the Mirza turned against Gorkha, went to Patna and informed authorities there that Rautahat was part of the province of Bengal. It is following this development that the Gorkhali *vakil*, Dinanath Upadhyaya, was sent to Calcutta to petition Gorkha's case.

If this account is correct, then the Beg might have got his right confirmed by Gorkha following very close on the heels of the fall of Makwanpur. This is not implausible. It was an established custom that those having rights in landed resources to get their grants reconfirmed by the new authority in the area. The tendency of local magnates such as the Beg to get their grants confirmed by various authorities clearly displays the accommodations they invariably had to make within diffuse and shifting fields of power. What is intriguing is: Why did Mirza Abdulla Beg turn against Gorkha, especially if he had already got his grant confirmed? What events transpired between 1762 and 1781 that brought about this change in the Beg's loyalties?

We know that between 1763-1770 the Beg made every effort to represent Rautahat as being fiscally separated from the accounts of Bihar. We also know that in 1778 a *parwaṇa* was issued by the *adālat* (court) at Saran commanding the Mirza's officers to be more careful in preventing *ryots* (cultivators) from deserting his *jāgir* and taking refuge in villages Barwa and Bijay.[21] This, in itself, is a striking development. Bijay and

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20 *Kājīs* and *sardārs* are high-ranking civil and military officers, the former being of a higher rank. See, *Monckton Report*, pp. 272-274.

21 See, John Young, Acting Magistrate of Saran district, to W. Leycester, Magistrate of Saran; Leycester to N. B. Edmonstone; and Edmonstone to Leycester, in *FP* Procs. 4 September 1812, no. 50, 51 & 52, *NAI*.

Burwa were villages occupied by Gorkha. In fact, at Bijay a Gorkhali *thānā* or police post had been built. Why were the *ryots* leaving the Beg's lands for a Gorkhali outpost?

It is very possible that Gorkhali officials may have induced this flight to secure labor that was always in short supply for purposes of cultivation. In fact, such acts were widely practiced along this frontier and even sanctioned by the authorities at Kathmandu.[22] Thus, the scattered evidence seems to suggest that by 1780 Mirza Abdulla Beg's tenurial rights as *birtādār/jāgirdār* were being subject to increasing stresses from powerful forces beyond his control, including the Gorkhalis. I have not come across any further evidence that might clarify the issue at this level.

Bikha Chaudhari, the Tharu leader in this part of the *tarriani*, interestingly notes in his deposition that between 1766-1770 Gorkhali officials were collecting revenue in this area. They were *Subba* Shivanand Upadhyaya and *Fauzdār* Prajapat Upadhyaya and one Harihar Upadhyaya (office unspecified).[23] Mirza Abdulla Beg is referred to as the *jāgirdār* of Rautahat from 1770-1782. Witnesses from the Bettiah *rājā's* side too would declare that the Beg was the *jāgirdār* of Rautahat, confirming the claim of the Bettiah *rājā* that the Beg being his dependent was granted Rautahat in *jāgir* by the Bettiah *rājā*, Dhrub Singh.[24]

It is possible that while the original Makwani grant was a *bikh birtā* grant, the Gorkha *rājā* had reconfirmed this grant *not as a bikh birtā grant*

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22 Shortages of labor have a long history on the Champaran-*tarriani* frontier; they predate and persist long after the Anglo-Gorkha war. For details on labor shortages in Mahottari in the eighteenth century see Burghart (1978: 188-219); For Gorkhali orders calling on officials to attract labor from *moglān* (the north Indian plains) see, Royal Orders (of 1805 A.D.) to *gosain* Baburiya Das of Bara and Saptari districts, and to *Sardār* Gaj Singh Khatri of Morang (in 1810 A.D.), in RRS (1984). The orders clearly state that where possible labor was to be procured not only from India, but even by enticing laborers already working on *birtā* or *jagir* lands, that is lands already assigned to persons in lieu of some service performed or as salary (*khāngī*). Shortages of labor would persist well into the Rana period as indicated by the attractive terms they offered to induce movements of labor from Champaran to Nepal (Mishra 1978:60, 131, 238).

23 *Subbās* are provincial administrators, usually in charge of a district. *Fauzdars* are officials charged with the police jurisdiction of criminal matters.

24 See, deposition of Sheikh Ziauddin, *mālguzār* of Mahsoonda, in *Monckton Report*, 1814.

but as a jāgir grant.[25] This might explain the claims of the *rājās* of Gorkha and Bettiah that Mirza Beg held Rautahat on a *jāgir* tenure and that the copper plate grant he had produced was a forgery. But whether the copper plate grant was a forgery or not is difficult to say. Did the Makwani *rājā*, the original grantor, even have the right to bestow this grant on the Beg's ancestors, given the tendency of many rulers to distribute lands on the peripheries of their kingdoms that were contested to their dependents?

Despite this uncertainty, what emerges clearly here is that the very act of granting land was capable of constituting and reconstituting social relationships. As a practice it was highly performative, productive of conflict and ambiguity and sedimented with both symbolic and material significance—the very stuff of any ethnography of statemaking. And given the number of times Mirza Beg family got their claims processed by various authorities—at least seven times between the years 1743-83—the amount of semantic, spatial and social rearranging that must have followed from this entire body of practices would have rendered the fiscal space of the *tappā* of Rautahat and its dependent *taraf* of Pachrauta extremely illegible—shot through with disputed claims and difficult for central authorities (both Gorkhali and British) to govern.

However, by 1781 the Beg was trying to maneuver himself into a position that would dissolve any ties of dependency to Gorkha. In 1783 Mirza Abdulla Beg would maintain that the Gorkha *rājā's* claim that Rautahat and its dependency belonged to Gorkha by virtue of the conquest of Makwanpur in 1762 was a weak one. Gorkhali officials, for their part, insisted that the conquest of Makwanpur entitled them to possession of its dependencies in the *tarriani* as well, which in this case were *tappā* Rautahat and its dependent *taraf* of Pachrauta. The Beg's counter argument was very interesting. He noted that the Gorkha *rājā* had no right to resume the *tappā*, "which had, ..., *for many years before his conquest remained khārige* [*khārij*] *or separate from it*". Rautahat had become separate from Makwanpur, in a fiscal sense. That is, it had become detached from the *mālguzārī jamā* (accounts showing revenue claims) of Makwanpur.[26]

I have already discussed the spatial implications of such an argument. What becomes increasingly apparent from all this is that the Beg saw

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25 *Bikh birtā* grants are a category of tax-free grants made by the state to individuals usually on an inheritable basis.

26 See, *PGGCB* (Revenue Department), Procs. 3 June, 1783, nos. 1-7, *WBSA*.

himself, in 1783, as detached from the dominions of Gorkha, and in fact from even Makwanpur before it, since at least as early as 1743. But then who was he attached to, especially since he seems to have made a number of attempts to sequester his possessions from both the provinces of Bihar and the kingdom of Gorkha?

We know that between 1763-1770 he considered his possessions separate from the *subbā* of Bihar. This undoubtedly would have been intended to preserve him from the demands of revenue administrators of Bihar in general and in particular from the influence of the Bettiah *rājā*, his most powerful local competitor. This might have simultaneously led him to seek a closer connection with Gorkha, a relationship that must have soured, forcing him to resituate himself. Thus, between 1781-1783 he might have tried to steer away from the influence of Gorkha by making the claim that *tappā* Rautahat had been separated from Makwanpur as far back as 1743. In 1783 we find him claiming to be a subject of the East India Company and therefore claiming its protection in preserving his claim to *tappā* Rautahat. Clearly, Mirza Abdulla Beg, a small "yam between two boulders" (Gorkha and the Company state) was seeking to maneuver himself into a position that offered him the most advantage. And he sought to do this at a time of political uncertainty, the region being buffeted by many forces, from within and beyond.

Here, to open another strand of analysis, the possibility should be noted that developments at Kathmandu may have had something to do with the attempts to oust the Beg from Rautahat. Between 1777-1785, when the Gorkhali *rājā* Ran Bahadur Shah was a minor, the ebbs and flows of politics in Kathmandu coalesced around the maneuverings of a number of factions within the ruling elite. It is possible that these factions were competing to enhance their symbolic and material capital by gaining control of the rich and newly opened resources of the Makwani Tarai.[27]

On the other hand, and at more local level, it is also possible that Gorkha's Upadhyaya Brahman revenue and military personnel who were stationed in Rautahat were associated with the same faction as the Gorkhali *vakil*, Dinanath Upadhyaya. Dinanath himself is supposed to

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27 The recursive relationship existing between the availability of land and potential for military expansion meant that there was a constant quest for fresh lands to conquer, in order to maintain a large standing army. This complex land-military relationship might also have induced such claims on the part of Gorkha's ruling elite. For details on the "land-military complex" see Stiller (1973:277-94).

have held some lands there. In fact, one of Bir Kishor's witnesses, Sheikh Ziauddin would assert that Dinanath Upadhyaya had bribed one Mohammad Hashim the *mokhtar* (legal agent) of Mirza Abdulla Beg, with a promise of five villages provided he gave evidence which established the right of the Gorkhalis to Rautahat. While the veracity of this statement is difficult to ascertain, the practice of bribe giving was a common one, and many fiscal arrangements in this period (and probably earlier as well) were arrived at through this established practice.[28]

Whatever the case may have been, the Gorkhalis (or at least a dominant faction within the ruling elite) were decided about one thing—the Beg would have to relinquish his right to *tappā* Rautahat and its dependent *tarāf* of Pachrauta.[29] Wresting control of *tappā* Rautahat from the Beg would not only have meant access to and control over the agrarian and forest resources of the Rautahat Tarai, but it would also have meant considerable prestige for the victorious faction.[30] George Foxcroft, an Englishman who passed through this area. observed that in 1783 Rautahat had assumed great significance for the "Nepaulians" and their loss of it might have been a great blow to Gorkha's territorial rights by way of conquest.[31]

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28 See, Deposition of Sheikh Ziauddin, *Monckton Report*, 1814.

29 See, Letter of *Rājā* Ran Bahadur Shah to Bahadur Shah, March 1783, Historical Letters, *Kausi Tosakhana Collection*, no. 85, *NAN*.

30 There is evidence to suggest that there were at least two competing factions in Kathmandu jockeying for control during this period, their spokesmen being Dinanath Upadhyaya and one Bhavnanni Shah (an agent of Bahadur Shah, a son of Prithvinarayan Shah). The three main issues that needed to be resolved with the East India Company were Gorkha's claims over the dependent *ṭappās* (Jamauli, Ramgir and Chigwan) of the Fort of Someshwar, Rautahat and Pachrauta and the surrender of the Makwani Prince living in the Company's territories. See, Letter from *Rājā* Ran Bahadur Shah to Bahadur Shah, January 1782, Historical Letters, *Kausi Tosakhana Collection*, no. 91, *NAN*; Letter from Ran Bahadur Shah to Bahadur Shah, March 1783, Historical Letters, *Kausi Tosakhana Collection*, no. 86, *NAN*. Details of the dispute over the three dependent *ṭappās* of Fort Someshwar (lying on the crest of the Someshwar range that separated the Gorkhali district of Chitwan from the Company's territories in Champaran), can be found in Chapter 3 of my dissertation (Michael n.d.).

31 See, Letter of George Foxcroft to Warren Hastings Governor General of Bengal, 13 May 1783, *PGGCB (Revenue Department)*, 3 June 1783, no. 1, *WBSA*. I have dealt with the details of the Foxcroft mission elsewhere (Michael:Forthcoming).

Processes of statemaking on the Champaran-*tarriani* frontier unfolded precisely at the sites of such complex negotiations between multiple actors located at many levels. The various forces outlined earlier had to negotiate the terrain of the Company's official discourse before the issue of Rautahat was resolved, albeit temporarily, in 1783. From 1781 the Governor-General in Council (Revenue Department) began to give increasing attention to the claims of Mirza Abdulla Beg over Rautahat. On the 28th of September 1781, the Governor-General-in-Council (Revenue Department) decided to accept the Beg's claim. But then historically contingent forces intervened. The Council's decision of September 28 slipped from official sight due to *Rājā* Chait Singh's rebellion in Benaras, with the result that the Company's officials in Patna were never informed. On the 20th of February 1782, William Brooke, the English Revenue Chief at Patna issued a *parwaṇa* to the Gorkhalis recognizing their claim over Rautahat.[32] On the strength of this *parwaṇa* the Gorkhalis claimed Rautahat.

Meanwhile the case dragged on. The Gorkhalis in order to pursue matters sent their *vakil* Dinanath Upadhyaya on a mission to Calcutta. He was unable to meet Warren Hastings, the English Governor-General, who was travelling westwards to quell the rebellion of Chait Singh, the *rājā* of Benaras. The Gorkhali *vakil* followed him. In Patna, Dinanath met Warren Hastings' wife and promised to provide Gorkhali assistance to the Company in its fight against the Benaras *rājā* Chait Singh. This move seems to have created a favorable impression on Hastings, if the Gorkhali version of this encounter is to be believed.[33] In October 1783 following

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32 Brooke acted thus on the advice of one Mr. Samuel Charters who was on an official commission relating to revenue. He advised Brooke on the 13th of February 1782 to avoid interference in the Nepal *rājā's* affairs relating to Rautahat. On the basis of this information, Brooke, unaware of the Governor-General-in-Council's earlier decision of September 28, 1781, issued a *parwaṇa* to the Gorkha *rājā*, Ran Bahadur Shah. In April 1782, Samuel Charters, after further investigations, asked Brooke to rescind the *parwaṇa* issued earlier and it seems that Brooke did so! See, *PGGCB* (Revenue Department), Procs. 3 June 1783, nos. 1-7, *WBSA*.

33 It would seem that a force was actually sent under Dhaukal Singh Basnayet and Parath Bhandari. On their arrival at Makwanpur, the forces were informed to return to Kathmandu since the Chait Singh's rebellion had been neutralized by the Company's forces. Dinanath Upadhyaya's recommendations to Kathmandu are interesting. While urging his masters at Kathmandu to send a military force, the *vakil* was very willing to make the necessary situational adjustments by leaving the manner of their

prolonged discussions among Company officials, the Governor-General, Warren Hastings summed up his opinion on the issue of *tappā* Rautahat in a Minute:

> Whatever may be the right of Mirza Abdulla Beg and however unjust the conduct of the Rājā of Nepal in depriving him of his Jagheer, it is a point not cognizable by this Government, *since the lands comprising it do not appertain to our jurisdiction*. I therefore recommend that the orders of 28 September 1781 and 25 February 1783 be repealed, our sepoys recalled, and Mirza Abdulla left to the mercy or Justice of his own Sovereign. [emphasis added][34]

What is intriguing about this minute is its ambiguity. What exactly did Hastings mean by "the lands comprising it do not appertain to our jurisdiction"? Surely, he was not using the same idiom as used by Mirza Abdulla Beg. Hastings was using pre-colonial fiscal discourse to argue a highly spatial point without having any inkling of the ramifications of his argument. For instance, when the Beg noted that *tappā* Rautahat was separated from Makwanpur, he was using a fiscal idiom that recognized that patches of land could be attached or separated from fiscal units on the basis of their obligation to pay (or not to pay) revenue (*māl*). It might be noted that "with regard to the income from the *kusa birtā*, *sarb ank birtā*, or *guṭhī* [rent free and religious grants] tracts of land, the recipients were completely outside the revenue system of Nepal" (Burghart 1987:259). Such representations and practices were common in pre-colonial north India and they took place without any consideration of the spatial integrity

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ultimate deployment dependent on the success or failure of the British in suppressing Chait Singh's rebellion. He noted that if the British were to succeed, then at least the Gorkhalis by sending a military force would succeed in (re)presenting themselves as allies of the British, and be better placed to pursue their claims over Rautahat. On the other hand, the failure of the British to quell the rebellion would be sufficient reason for the same military force to sweep down and take control of the plains as far south as Hajipur in Saran District (Bihar). See, PRNW 1983 [1824], 2:371; Naraharinath 2022 v.s.:10.

34 *PGGCB* (Revenue Department), 11 November 1783, no. 56, *WBSA*. What Hastings meant by the "orders of 25 February 1783," I have been unable to discern. The *Duncan Report* does mention that sometime in February 1782, Company authorities at Calcutta decided to grant a *sanad* in favor of the Beg, following his application seeking confirmation of his claim to *ṭappā* Rautahat. It could be that Hastings is referring to this decision, and the '1783' inserted into his minute is a copyist's error. That Hastings might be referring to Brooke's *parwaṇa* of 20 February 1782, is highly unlikely.

or compactness of the territory in question. Hastings' inability to recognize this subtle point and its spatial ramifications—namely that such representations and practices do not generate coherent and compact images of space—seems to reflect the confusion and ambiguity the early Company officials faced in their attempts to understand the production of pre-colonial fiscal divisions.

Company officials seem to have displayed what I will call a panoptic vision of space. States were visualized as territorially coherent entities, occupying definite portions of the earth's surface, and visible from above. The body of the state was further divided and sub-divided into non-overlapping divisions. These twin notions of the surveillance of space from above and its demarcation into manageable units can be found in Foucault's description of a Benthamite prison (Foucault 1977; cf. Kaplan 1995 for an application to South Asia). Such a vision of territory found its best expression in modern maps where the entire body of the state (along with its internal divisions clearly marked) could be displayed for purposes of control and manipulation. This is clearly evident in the representations of the state in the works of Company surveyors and cartographers of this period. For instance, James Rennell's maps of the kingdom of Bengal, prepared in 1768, clearly show the divisions and sub-divisions of the province marked off from one another by distinct linear boundaries.

It is obvious that this was not the spatial reality that existed on the ground, and Rennell himself was probably aware of this when he inserted these imaginary boundaries. Rennell's map-making as signifying practice is revealing insofar as it seeks to objectify, and neatly order the messy spatial architecture of the territories the Company had just gained control of.[35] Maps like Rennell's reveal more than anything else *what Company officials wanted to see*, because that was the only way they were able to grasp or "know" the space of the state. It was only in the 1840s that Company surveyors would succeed in mapping pre-colonial fiscal divisions such as *tappās* and *parganās*. And it is through these maps that we get the first images of the intermixed and discontinuous bodies of those divisions.

In this section, I have attempted to reconstruct the fluctuating tenurial status of fiscal divisions such as *tappā* Rautahat. *Tappā* Rautahat like almost every other fiscal division on the Anglo-Gorkha frontier was

35 See, A Map of the Kingdom of Bengal, by James Rennell, 1768, IOR X\1018, *OIOC* Map Collection, *BL*.

located at the intersection of conflicting claims of different states (in this case, Makwanpur, Bettiah, Gorkha, and the Company state) to its agrarian and forest resources. In the process of forwarding of these claims a number of overlapping layers of rights of access to and control over *tappā* Rautahat were created. I maintain that variables such as recurrent warfare, unsettled political conditions and the emergence of new political formations (such as Gorkha and the Company after 1765) coupled with the situated actions of various human agents such as Mirza Abdulla Beg, Dinanath Upadhyaya, Warren Hastings, William Brooke and others, intervened to bring about a number of rearrangements and realignments among these layers of rights.[36]

These rearrangements and realignments left in their wake fiscal divisions whose actual location was difficult to pinpoint. Between 1742-1783 *tappā* Rautahat had shifted back and forth between Makwanpur, Bettiah, Bengal, the Company and Gorkha. And, even in its spatial layout, this *tappā* does not seem to have been a coherent whole. I was able to reach this conclusion following the examination of an 1820 map of this frontier.[37]

The map clearly shows that the "dependent" *tarāf* of Pachrauta lay cut off from the main body of *tappā* Rautahat by an intervening stretch of territory formed by *parganā* Bariyarpar which was a subdivision of the adjoining Gorkhali district of Bara (see Map 2). In the Company's official discourse, Pachrauta is always referred to as a "dependent" *tarāf*, "dependent" on *tappā* Rautahat. In fact, I suspect that terms such as "attached", "separated" and "dependent" that recur in pre-colonial revenue discourse often encoded shifting tenurial connections and relationships that joined and separated patches of territory in a highly irregular and discontinuous fashion. While this seems to have posed no spatial

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36 What became of Mirza Abdulla Beg is not known. In 1801 Girbana Juddha Bikram Shah, the *rājā* of Gorkha, is recorded as having given instructions to Beghuwa Khawas and Damodar Jaisi (who were probably officers based in the Saptari-Mahottari area) to present an elephant as a gift to one Mirza Abdulla Beg. It is unclear if this Mirza Abdulla Beg was the former "jagirdar" of Rautahat. See, *RRC* 24:127.

37 "Sketch of the line of boundary between the Nipaul Terriani and the Zillāh Sarun, prepared for the information of Government and reduced from the original survey by Lt. J. Pickersgill, 1822, IOR/X/2994, *OIOC* Map Collection, *BL*.

dilemmas to indigenous authorities, for Company officials such references jarred their own conceptions of the spatial coherence and integrity of the fiscal divisions they pertained to.

However, by 1783 it would appear that the issue of *tappā* Rautahat was finally resolved. But only for a short while. The problems of spatiality, of the organization and knowledge of pre-colonial fiscal space, and of the practices that produced them would persist, and become increasingly difficult for Company officials to ignore. They would crop up again in the first decade of the nineteenth century at the same place where it all began—the Champaran-*tarriani* frontier, and this time more specifically within that fuzzy area that constituted the common boundary of the *tappās* of Rautahat and Nannor. This takes us to another level of conflict and competition where the processes set out thus far unfolded at a lower level of resource access and control.

The Blurred and Entangled Edges of *Tappā* Rautahat and Nannor: The Case of the 22(?) Villages

In 1783, as already seen, the Company recognized the *tappās* of Rautahat and Nannor as distinct and separate entities with the former being handed over to Gorkhali authorities. *Tappā* Nannor remained in the hands of the *rājā* of Bettiah. This act, clothed in the idiom of pre-colonial fiscal discourse only served to leave many spatial questions unattended. For instance, what were the actual extent, resources and boundaries of this entity called "*tappā* Rautahat"? Neither the Company nor Gorkha had any real idea. In short, while Company officials gave away a fiscal-spatial entity called "*tappā* Rautahat" to Gorkha, its ontology remained an epistemological and spatial enigma. Consequently, by 1814 the two states were once again faced with a number of dilemmas that offered no easy solutions. In this section, I will explore those circumstances relating to twenty-two(?) disputed villages that knit the common boundary of *tappās* Rautahat and Nannor into an entangled space (see Map 2).

In 1814, the dilemmas faced by the two states on the Champaran-*tarriani* frontier pertained largely to the location of at least twenty-two villages, their boundaries and tenurial statuses. These villages straddled the boundaries of *tappā* Rautahat and Nannor, both of which belonged to the now dismembered *parganā* of Simraon.

Between 1783 and 1814, following the granting of *tappā* Rautahat to Gorkha, the boundary separating it from *tappā* Nannor became the subject of dispute between the officials of Gorkha and the East India Company.

Gorkhali officials would maintain that these twenty-two villages belonged to *tappā* Rautahat, while the Bettiah *rājā* Bir Kishor Singh and his agents would argue that they belonged to the neighboring *tappā* of Nannor. Company officials were drawn into this dispute since the *rājā* of Bettiah was a Company subject. In 1811, the disputes took a violent turn when the Gorkhali *subba* of Rautahat, Laxman Giri, was allegedly killed in a skirmish by the supporters of the Bettiah *rājā*.[38] From 1813-1814, the entire question became the subject of a number of official investigations on both sides.[39]

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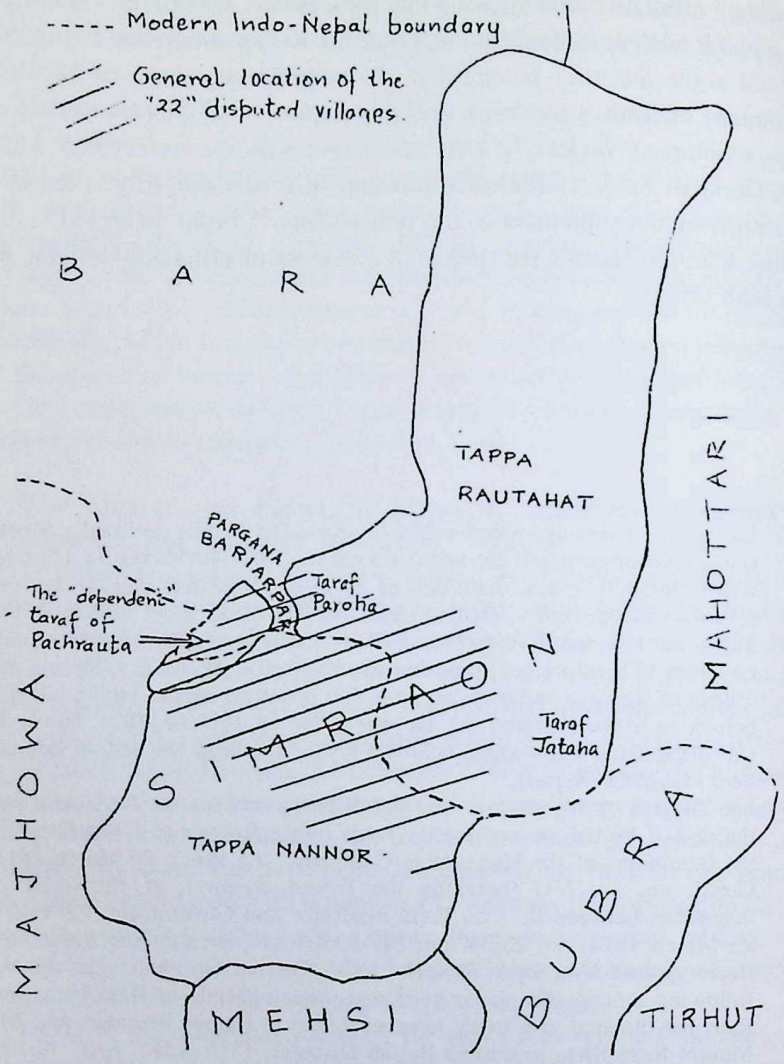
38 Laxman Giri was appointed *subbā* in 1809 after he was awarded a 5-year *ijārā* (revenue contract) for *ṭappā* Rautahat. (*RRC* 40:54-58). In 1811 he was ordered to check disturbances in *ṭappā* Rautahat caused by the followers of the *rājā* of Bettiah (*RRC* 40:194). Like most *subbās* in the Tarai, he was sensitive to the need to secure and maximize his *ijara* revenues. Therefore, to establish his authority, he built a fort at the village of Kewyya and initiated a number of armed attacks on the villages belonging to the Bettiah *rājā*. He was killed on 19 June, 1811. His body was decapitated and dragged behind a horse. The head was sent to Bettiah. See, *Monckton Report*.

39 See "Report on the enquiry into the disputes between the Nepaulese and the *rājā* of Bettiah concerning the lands on the frontier of Zillāh Sarun in the dominions of the Honourable Company," *FS* Procs. 26 March 1813, Consl. no. 36, *NAI* (hereafter the *Young Report*); cf. the series of dispatches between Lt. Col. Paris Bradshaw and Government, *FP* Procs. 25 March 1814, no. 25-34, pp. 547-635, *NAI* (hereafter the *Bradshaw Report*); and *Monckton Report, 1814*. On the Gorkhali side see the following among others: "*subbās* and other officials of Bara-Parsa and Rautahat directed to provide necessary help to Ramjit Bhandari and Mir Munshi Raza Khan in settling Border Disputes, 1810 A.D.," *RRC* 39:165; "*Guru* (Ranganath Pandit) authorized to demarcate Nepal-India border with *amil* (*amin*?) from India, in Butwal and elsewhere, 1813 A.D.," *RRC* 39:557\index; Earlier, the death of *Subbā* Laxman Giri had resulted in a Gorkhali investigation of the affair. It was led by *Sardār* Ranjang Bania, *Subbā* Bala Bhanjan Pande, *Guru* Ranganath Pandit, *Kazi* Ranoddip Singh and *Sardār* Parsuram Thapa. See deposition of Gorkhali witness Durga Chaudhari, *Monckton Report, 1814*. See also letter from Rangnath Pandit to Girbana Juddha Bikram Shah, December 1812, giving details about Young's arrival on the frontier (Naraharinath 2022v.s.:69).



Map 2: Location and internal divisions of Pargana Simraon, 1814 A.D. This map is not drawn to scale. (Mapwork by B. Michael)

An analysis of the depositions of fifteen witnesses taken during John Young's investigation in 1812, and the various lists of disputed villages drawn up by Company officials proves to be revealing. For one thing, the

Bettiah *rājā's* witnesses seemed to have been more coherent and unanimous in their arguments, especially when it came to reiterating the fact that the twenty two villages belonged to Bettiah and not to Gorkha. But this in and of itself would not have meant that their claims were genuine. We need to bear in mind that investigations such as those conducted by the Company's officials, with their particular legal practices and peculiar questions (about linear boundaries, issues of possession, objectification of rights, and their quest for principles of right, justice and reason) were something that the *rājā* of Bettiah and his supporters, following nearly fifty years of Company rule, had become quite skilled in negotiating. Thus, Bir Kishor Singh, the *rājā* of Bettiah, being more familiar with British legal procedures and arguments would presumably have schooled his witnesses accordingly.

Undoubtedly, the Gorkhalis might have instructed their witnesses as well, but these witnesses seem to have had little idea about what the British investigating officer was looking for. Thus, Bassun Raut, the Ahir leader and key Gorkhali witness, would make potentially damaging statements claiming that the disputed twenty-two villages had been under the charge of Bir Kishor Singh since 1791. He would further clarify that of the twenty-two villages, seven had of old belonged to the English government, while the remaining fifteen had been recovered from a state of barrenness and brought under cultivation under the English government. Such statements would undoubtedly have convinced British officers of the legitimacy of their own claims. The Ahir leader statements contain other fascinating details that I will examine in a moment.[40] For now it is sufficient to note that there is an element of ambiguity that encoded these exchanges, especially on the part of the Gorkhali witnesses.

Another instance of ambiguity can be seen in the fact that while Gorkhali witnesses found it difficult to delineate the boundary that separated the possessions of Gorkha from those of the Company, the witnesses from Bettiah were able to do this without much difficulty, clearly tracing the linear run of the boundary. Indeed, it is intriguing that people sharing a common frontier could display such dissimilar spatial imaginations. However, I suspect that the witnesses on the part of the *rājā* of Bettiah might have been instructed to speak in this fashion rather

40 For Bassun Raut's deposition see *Monckton Report, 1814*. Details about the depositions of these witnesses can be found in Appendix 4 of my dissertation (Michael n.d.).

than having possessed any real knowledge of when, how and by whom such a linear boundary might have been constituted in the first place.

Other details, especially those concerning trends in revenue collection emerge clearly even through the epistemological fog of such investigations. Gorkhali witnesses in particular are clear about one fact: that the rights to collect revenue from these twenty-two villages were constantly fluctuating between various parties, never remaining the sole monopoly of a single authority. The depositions of witnesses such as Bikha Chaudhari, Bassun Raut and Girdhari Lal clearly reveal that different parties were collecting revenues from these villages. And the agents included Gorkhali officials (1766-1770; 1782-1785), those of Mirza Abdulla Beg (1770-1782), and of Bir Kishor Singh, the *rājā* of Bettiah (from 1790 onwards).[41]

It appears these agents may have acted independently, and even simultaneously in the same area. For instance we know that Gorkhali officials like *Subba* Shivanand Upadhyaya and *Fauzdār* Prajapat Upadhyaya were active in the area of the twenty-two villages in 1766. We also know that Mirza Abdulla Beg was active in the region at the same time, and that in 1766 he took advantage of *rājā* Jugal Kishor Singh's flight from Bettiah to sequester ten villages rented from the *rājā* to his "*jāgirdāri*" holdings. These ten villages also became disputed in 1813. Bassun Raut in his deposition would show a distinct lack of concern for issues such as histories of revenue collection. On the other hand he expressed a greater concern for the question of who was collecting *at the moment*, the underlying sub-text being that revenue collection rights could fluctuate between various individuals (belonging to either of the states) as it always did, and all that mattered (for the Ahir leader) was paying revenue to the concerned authority when the time arrived.

Such statements have spatial implications. His statements reveal that he might pay revenue to different authorities at different times, or even that people belonging to a single village could be paying revenue to different authorities at the same time. This meant that the fiscal units to which they belonged (*mauzās, ṭappās, parganās*) could shift back and forth between different collecting authorities, or a single unit could itself be

41 The dates are as given by Bikha Chaudhari, and even though they might be speculative, they do clearly show that between 1743-1814, the collection of revenue on the Champaran-*tarriani* frontier was never resolved in favor of one party for any length of time. See, depositions of Bikha Chaudhari, Bassun Raut and Girdhari Lal, *Monckton Report, 1814.*

dispersed among various powerful revenue collecting agents belonging to two or more different states.

Also emerging from these depositions is the fact that the *parganā* (*Gadh*) Simraon was an integrated whole consisting of two *tappās*—Rautahat and Nannor–which some time in the eighteenth century fissioned into its constituent parts.[42] This kind of fissioning might be traced to competition between two political formations—such as the little kingdoms of Makwanpur and Bettiah whose claims over this *parganā* might have had the net result of bringing about its disintegration. The twenty-two villages were not always under cultivation and as one witness suggested; they were barren and brought under cultivation sometime after 1790.[43]

Added to all this is the ambiguity that surrounds the actual number of the villages that became the cause of dispute between the two governments in 1814. A comparison of the lists prepared by John Young, Monckton and Paris Bradshaw reveals discrepancies in both the number and place names of the villages in question. Most discernible are at least ten new villages in Monckton's list that do not appear in Young's list. Similarly, Bradshaw while claiming that twenty-four villages (and not twenty-two) were disputed, supplies the names of only sixteen villages.[44] I suggest that the number "twenty-two" not be taken literally, but rather as a short hand to indicate the presence of a large number of disputed

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42 See deposition of Girdhari Lal in *Monckton Report, 1814.* He claimed his family had traditionally held the office of the *quanungo* for the whole of *parganā* Simraon. As to who their overlord might have been—whether a kingdom in the hills (Makwanpur) or some other authority in the plains attached to the province of Bihar—I have been unable to discern.

43 See, Bassun Raut's deposition, *Monckton Report, 1814.* Interestingly, the Bettiah *rājā* Bir Kishor Singh had not made any mention of these twenty-two villages in any of his revenue engagements with government in the 1790's. This leaves the question of his actual possession of them open to contestation and we will never know for certain whether he had tried to conceal the existence of these villages, or if they were at that time in the hands of some other revenue collecting agency, or if they had been lying "waste." See, letter from W. Leycester, Magst. of Saran to J. Adam, Secretary to Government, 5 January 1816, *FS* Consl. 3 February, 1816, no. 21, *NAI.* Two witnesses also claimed that the twenty-two villages had originally been forest, cultivated by the Bettiah *rājā* Bir Kishor Singh since 1790. See depositions of Bassun Raut and Sheikh Ziauddin, *Monckton Report, 1814.*

44 See Michael n.d., Appendix 4.

villages that lay all along the Anglo-Gorkha frontier. The following figures should bear this out:

Table 1: Total Number of Disputed Villages on the Champaran-*tarriani* Frontier in 1814 A.D.

Tappās	Total no. of villages in 1776, taken from a document under the seal of Qazi Nur-ul Haq, 1178 *fasli*.	Villages occupied by Gorkha from 1781 onwards.	Out of the villages occupied by Gorkha, the number of villages lying on or near the *Raj Bandh**
tappā Buhas	113	32	30
tappā Bulthur	51	12	9
tappā Nannor	159	16	3
Total	323	60	42

* The *Raj Bandh* was an embankment supposedly constructed by the Bettiah *Rājā* Dalip Singh (r. 1695-1715). English officers looking for some signs of a material boundary separating Gorkha from the Company's territories quickly latched onto the idea of this embankment as a boundary and represented it in official discourse as forming the ancient limits of the district of Champaran.[45]

The picture that emerges is of a landscape that was shot through with various kinds of *mauzā* or village disputes. These disputes often revolved around the question of right(s) of access to or control over one or more villages. Sometimes they also revolved around the question of the spatial extent and layout of the village. But in order to better understand the dynamics of such village disputes and their spatial ramifications we need to examine more evidence from yet another source.

In this case, the evidence is available in the form of testimony provided by a *gosaīn* , Hait Giri. In 1799, on the advice of one Sukhlal

45 For details, see Paris Bradshaw to John Adam in *FP* Procs. 25 March 1814, Consl. no. 33, pp. 618-633, *NAI*. The number of disputed villages continues to be high as we move towards the adjoining district of Tirhut where by 1816, sixty-three villages had become disputed between the two states. See, Report of C. I. Sealy, Magst of Tirhut to John Adam, Secretary to Government at Fort William, *FS* Consl. 16 August 1814, no. 20, *NAI*.

Giri,[46] he obtained a *paṭṭā* (a deed) for a 10-year *ijāvā* for the village of Ghewra from the Gorkha rājā. This village lay close to the Rautahat-Nannor boundary. Ghewra being located near a forest, the *gosaĩn* began to collect *bankar* or forest dues from the local populace. The details about how the *gosaĩn* began to collect *bankar* are as follows. Hait Giri was informed by the people of Ghewra that the forest that lay near the village, belonged to Ghewra. Accordingly, he claimed the forest as being included in his *ijāvā* grant and began to demand *bankar* dues from anyone coming there to cut wood. Subsequently, he was informed by the officials of Bir Kishor Singh, the rājā of Bettiah that the *bankar* dues were always collected by the rājā officers. But the *gosaĩn* would not relent. Ultimately, the local people submitted to his authority, made a *nazr* of a goat and one rupee and from then on began to pay the *bankar* to the *gosaĩn*. In this manner, the *gosaĩn* reconstituted a pre-existing right and became the new authority.[47] But he was unable to retain his rights for long. In 1804, he was dispossessed, not by the Bettiah rājā, but by Gorkhali officials stationed in the area.[48]

Hait Giri's account testifies to the tussles going on between local officialdom and small landholders for the control of the agrarian resources of the Champaran-*tarriani* frontier. It also reveals how tenurial rights could overlap and generate conflict, and in due course even be reconstituted. Such developments were the very stuff of issues of power. This incident also takes us away from a simplistic conception of centralized state power, to one which admits of and focuses our attention on the discontinuities, contradictions and multi-directional flows between different levels of authority. The practices of Hait Giri, local officials, and the villagers of Ghewra point to the creativity human agents bring to bear

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46 The term *gosain* is a broad generic one, applied to the various mendicant groups and orders operating in the Gangetic plains, and beyond into "Nepal." Strictly speaking, *gosains* were Shaivite monks (Pinch 1996:24, 43-44). Sukhlal Giri headed a *gosain* order based at the village of Aooreeya (sic) on the Rautahat-Nannor boundary. We know that Hait Giri later quarreled with Sukh Lal Giri and left the *gosain* order. See, letter from P. Bradshaw to J. Adam, 6 July 1814, *KRR*, microfilm reel IOR 2, part 2, pp. 35-38, *NAN*. The same can be found in FP Procs. 26 July 1814, no. 69-70, pp. 508-18, *NAI*. Hereafter, they will be referred to as *Hait Giri's Account, 1814*.

47 See, *Hait Giri's Account, 1814*.

48 Probably one *Subbā* Shakti Ballabh Upadhyaya and *Fauzdar* Bal Bhadra Upadhyaya. Hait Giri indicates that the latter was *fauzdar* in this area in 1807. See, *Hait Giri's Account, 1814*.

on existing institutional arrangements, and to the semantic and material ingredients they would use to forge new bases of authority. In this scenario, these actors had little concern for their physical location within the territories of a state, or for preserving the integrity of a linear boundary, or even the connectedness of territory. What mattered most to them was securing control over various kinds of resources. Hait Giri's account clearly details the numerous *situational adjustments* local agents on the Champaran-*tarriani* frontier were making in their (often violent) contests over resources.[49] The frequent situational adjustments outlined in Table 2 should make this point evident.

What is evident from this discussion—even if Hait Giri's information is incorrect—is the existence of shifting patterns of alignments among various elites located at discrete levels who were constantly jostling with each other to gain access to or control over the agrarian and forest resources of the area. The actions of agents such as Hait Giri, Bal Bhadra Upadhyaya, Jiv Lal Rai and Meherban Khan constitute powerful strategies for resource control. There is no evidence to suggest that these disputes might have revolved around issues of caste or religion. While caste, lineage and kinship might have played an important role in the mobilization of support cadres of these local elites, their competitions—over resources—often seem to have transcended such considerations. In their quest to corner resources (which could assume the form of tenurial rights; crops and lands and the attendant issues of authority to claim them; honor and status), they often made alliances with each other. Like disputes, such alliances often spilled over into the spaces of neighboring states. Strategies of resource control were instrumental in producing the intermixed spaces of Gorkha and the Company state on the Champaran-*tarriani* frontier. The variations, contingencies and haphazardness of such strategies of resource control constitute the critical ingredients needed for a reconstruction of processes of statemaking on the Anglo-Gorkha frontier.

For instance, local elites such as Jivlal Rai had landed interests in Jaynagar, which fell within *tarāf* Paroha in *ṭappā* Rautahat. If he were a

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49 I have adapted the term 'situational adjustments' from the work of Sally Falk Moore (cited in Turner 1985: 153). Its deployment is crucial to the argument I am making here. I take 'situational adjustments' to mean those practices through which persons either arrange their immediate situations by exploiting the indeterminacies of the context they are placed in, or generate indeterminacies by redefining the rules and their roles within such historically configured contexts.

Table 2: Profile of Disputes Unfolding on the Boundaries of *Tappās* Nannor and Rautahat, 1799-1811[50]

Year	Dispute Between	Competing Agents	Competition Over	Action Performed	Remarks
1799	Ghewra vs Bettiah	1. Hait Giri 2. Bettiah rājā's *fauzdār*	*Bankar* rights	right reconstituted in favor of Hait Giri	Hait Giri takes control over the deserted village of Ghewra. He is unaware of the boundary between Gorkha and the Company
1804	dispute over Ghewra	1. Hait Giri 2. Gorkhali *fauzdār* Bal Bhadra Upadhyaya	Ghewra village	Hait Giri evicted	Evidence that Gorkhali officials are acting independently to oust even those who had received land grants from the Gorkha rājā.
1806	Ghewra vs Jaynagar vs Burwa	1. Meherban Khan and Burhan Khan of Burwa 2. Subbās Rai of Jaynagar 3. Ghewra under Bal Bhadra Upadhyaya(?)	Boundaries	dispute does not appear to have turned violent	the dispute was over 5 or 6 *bighās* of land
1807	Burwa vs Ghewra and Jaynagar	1. Meherban Khan of Burwa 2. Gorkhali *fauzdār* Bal Bhadra Upadhyaya	Standing corn crop (probably includes disputes over boundaries)	Bal Bhadra Upadhyaya instructs people of Ghewra and Jaynagar to cut the corn crop. People of Burwa lose the crop.	Bal Bhadra Upadhyaya was stationed at Kurrurbana (Kataharban?). Attempts to resolve the dispute fail.
1808	Burwa vs Ghewra and Jaynagar	same as above	Standing grain crop	Bal Bhadra Upadhyaya collects the standing grain	persistence of dispute on previous year's pattern

50 The sources for this table are the following. See, *Hait Giri's Account*, *Young Report*, *Monckton Report*, *Map of parganā Semrown, District Sarun* by Alex Wyatt, 1847. Wyatt's map was obtained from the photographic collection of rare British Revenue Survey maps in the possession of the late Professor Qeyamuddin Ahmad of Patna University, Bihar. I acknowledge with gratitude "Qeyam Sahab's" kindness in making his collection available for my perusal.

1809	Burwa vs Jaynagar	1. Maherban Khan of Burwa 2. Jivlal Rai of Jaynagar	Standing summer crop (probably includes disputes over boundaries)	people of Jaynagar are put to flight by the people of Burwa. People of Jaynagar lose control of the crop.	reversal of pattern.
1811	Jaynagar vs Ghewra and Burwa	1. Jivlal Rai of Jaynagar 2. holders of many neighboring villages	General control of the area's resources and establishment of Jivlal Rai's authority	forced collections carried out by Jivlal Rai with help of over 1000 armed retainers	Jivlal Rai even goes to Aooryeea (sic) and abuses Sukhlal Giri. (Because of the *mahant's* close connections with Gorkhali officials posted in the Tarai?)
1811	Kathmandu vs villages in the area	1. Laxman Giri 2. other local magnates, especially Jivlal Rai	Security of Laxman Giri's *ijārā* tenure	Laxman Giri imprisons Jivlal Rai's people including his son. He burns Burwa and other villages such as Athmoun(?), Gorasahan, Sirinagar, Kewyya, Poorniya and Koreiya. A fort is also built at Kewyya	Introduction of Kathmandu's agents into the arena. These agents are also drawn into the logic of local disputes. The intervention of Kathmandu only escalates the scale of violence
1811	Kathmandu vs local villages	1. Laxman Giri 2. local magnates such as Jivlal Rai, Meherban Khan and Girdhari Rai 3. others who now form a coalition and assemble on the part of the rājā of Bettiah	the territorial rights of the two states; disputed international boundaries	June 19. Laxman Giri is killed by an armed crowd of over 2500 (?) persons assembled in the name of the Bettiah rājā. Jivlal Rai and Meherban Khan are present at the time of this incident and play a leading role in organizing it	this is probably how local boundary disputes get transformed into formal territorial disputes between states. As the states' agents and agencies are increasingly drawn into the dynamics of local conflicts, the disputes assume "international" proportions. Obviously, this is one of the many possible variations such conflicts could assume.

subject of Bettiah and the Company, how did he possess interests in a village that definitely belonged to Gorkha ? As a subject of the rājā of Bettiah we also find him engaging Meherban Khan, another subject of the Bettiah rājā. Similarly we find *Fauzdār* Bal Bhadra Upadhyaya displacing Hait Giri who had received a *paṭṭā* to Ghewra from Girbana Juddha Bikram Shah, the ruler of Gorkha. The *fauzdār's* actions only confirm what I have noted in earlier sections: local officials from both sides seem to have played a crucial role in the generation of such disputes and in making all sorts of temporary arrangements for reasons of personal gain. The institutional order established by both states to administer the collection of revenue possessed sufficient plasticity to allow this kind of maneuvering. Such agents and their adherents could be found working across the divides of two or more states in the Gangetic plains.[51]

Such actions also reveal the changing structure of power within little kingdoms such as the Bettiah raj.[52] Power in the raj, while vested in the hands of the rājā, flowed in a manner that was discontinuous and not necessarily from the top to the bottom. Its uneven lineages can be traced in complicated ways in the situated engagements of various local agents. Their actions possessed sufficient potential to rework internal arrangements within the raj (as I have shown above), and even outside it. In this connection, Yang (1989:233) confirms that the Bettiah raj witnessed a greater development of intermediary tenures than the neighboring little kingdom of Hathwa. This could only have meant that there was a greater diffusion of loci of power in Bettiah, whereby dependents could have acted on their own accord, independent of the rājā's initiative.

Centers and their multiple peripheries in little kingdoms constituted an interactive network of relationships unfolding at multiple points, at many levels, and in as many directions. This framework for studying the operations of power within a little kingdom enables us to work out the details of what Eric Wolf has called 'structural power': power that structures the political economy, that has the ability to deploy and

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51 In another instance, in April 1793, one Janki Ram and other merchants of Nepal had asked the Board of Revenue for permission to farm lands in *parganā* Batiya (probably Bettiah?). (See no. 394 in Hunter 1894).

52 In making this assertion, I keep in mind Yang's useful point that the colonial state was indeed a limited one, its power invariably refracted through highly localized but dense force-fields of culture, power and history that informed the internal dynamics of many little kingdoms in Bihar (Yang 1989).

allocate social labor and resources (Wolf 1990). My attempt here is to alert us to the spatial effects of this kind of (structural) power.

The arrival of the Gorkhali *Subbā* Laxman Giri seems to have only drawn him into the prevailing relationships of dispute which then underwent further alignments and realignments. It is clear, for instance, that when the *subbā* conducted attacks on various villages, he did so in response to the earlier attacks of Jivlal Rai. As authorities at higher levels of the administration took notice of these developments the camp lines were formally drawn around these higher authorities such as the Bettiah raj, the Company state and Gorkha. Laxman Giri's death receives a new twist when (re)viewed against the backdrop of local initiative and struggle. But accounts of the Anglo-Gorkha war generally fail to view events such as the death of *Subbā* Laxman Giri within an unfolding scenario of local initiative, instead becoming rapidly drawn into the discourses and practices of agents located at other higher levels.

Disputes over boundaries, too, were generative of spatial effects, often rendering the edges of fiscal units fluid and blurred. The presence of numerous disputes centering around the location of boundaries of estates, villages and parcels of lands was yet another variable that added to the shifts and fluctuations in the fiscal template of the region. One such dispute unfolded between the villages of Bounra and Bounree in the Company's territory and the villages of Tehoki, Jaimangalpur and Boodgaon within Gorkha's territories. Bounra and Bounree lay in *ṭappā* Bulthur, *parganā* Majhowa, in Champaran within the Company's territories, while Tehoki, Jaimangalpur and Boodgaon lay in *parganā* Naurangiya, in Gorkha's *tarriani* district of Parsa. The Gorkhali controlled villages lay about a *cos* (about one mile) north of Bounra and Bounree. The villages of Bounra and Tehoki had a fluctuating agrarian history. They were relatively new in 1814, having been brought back into cultivation in 1783. Prior to that they were desolate. The initiators of agrarian expansion in both cases were *gosaĩns*, one Pursotam Giri in Bounra, and Soobhao (?) Giri in Tehoki. In 1785 a dispute arose between the two which was subsequently resolved. In 1808 fresh disputes arose over 100 *bighas* of land.

The fact that they were involved in disputes with each other complicates the role of these *gosaĩn* communities in promoting agrarian expansion, dissuading us from perceiving a unity of purpose in their actions. Far from it, there were many ruptures and fault lines within the *gosaĩn* communities on this frontier that prevent us from clubbing them together as a unified group. In this connection, it was alleged by some of

the witnesses that it was the *gosaĩns* of Aooreeya who had planned the usurpation of the twenty-two villages. There is no further evidence to confirms this. But it is known that the leader of the *gosaĩns* at Aooreeya, one Sukhlal Giri, had a very tense meeting with Laxman Giri (also of the *gosaĩn* community) when the latter paid a courtesy visit on him on his appointment as *subbā* to *ṭappā* Rautahat—it being the custom for a *subba* of the Tarai to pay respects to the leader of the *gosaĩn* sect at Aooreeya on his arrival in the Tarai. The meeting it is alleged went as follows:

Sukhlal Giri (S.G.): I hear you have brought fetters of iron from Nepal. For whom are they ?

Laxman Giri (L.G.): Yes, three pairs—for Angad Bhajoo, Shazad Giri and Dadanand Diwan.

S.G.: What have you brought for me ?

L.G.: Iron fetters are not good for you, but golden ones will be sent from Nepal. I have come to take possession of the twenty-two villages with orders from Bhim Sen *Kajī*.

S.G.: Why do you want to extend your authority this far, something no previous *subba* has done?

L.G.: If you were not my *guru*, I would dispatch you with my sword. [53]

Clearly the *gosaĩns* were not a unified group and straddled the dominions of both states, pursuing their own projects individually or in small groups, making the situational adjustments necessary to negotiate their state-structured lives.

The reasons for such boundary disputes could be varied. Boundary disputes at this micro-level coalesced around issues like crop harvesting and water sharing, variously induced by the changing boundaries of rivers and the maneuverings of local actors such as the petty *zamīndārs* and government officials. Boundary disputes that followed the alluvial and diluvial action of rivers were locally referred to as *dāyar* disputes. And they constituted another source of fluidity and fluctuation in the spatial layout of pre-colonial fiscal divisions. This is especially true since rivers constituted the boundaries of many fiscal divisions. The eastern boundary of *ṭappā* Rautahat, for example, was formed by the Bagmati river, while the river Gandak separated Champaran from the *sarkārs* of Gorakhpur and Saran. Evidence for such *dāyar* disputes is available from different parts of *sarkār* Champaran and beyond from all over north India. Often there existed customary institutional arrangements that provided for the

53 See *Hait Giri's Account*.

resolution of such conflict. But then, such resolutions often lasted only until the river in question took another turn.[54]

Boundaries thus became cultural capital. Many of the struggles that were articulated at various levels were not so much over their maintenance as much as about their expansion and reconfiguration. In Champaran (as elsewhere) a number of villages possessed disputed boundaries. For instance: in *ṭappā* Nannor (*parganā* Simraon) the villages of Buswa (Burwa?), Khurhora, Gorah-sun *, Sirreepore or Seireenuggur*, Kewyya or Hurraj Puttee*, Amora*, Poornyhia; in *ṭappā* Bulthur (*parganā* Majhowa) the villages of Bhownra, Bhownree, Nurkuttia. The villages marked thus *, though disputed in 1812, did not appear in the records of the office of the Collector of Saran.[55] Thus their actual status prior to 1812 was unclear, and their non-appearance in the Company's records rendered them illegible for its officials.

Such disputes and scenarios of competition can be found all over the region at various levels, and between varying agents. For instance, the Bettiah raj and Makwanpur had boundary disputes in 1727, when the Bettiah rājā's officers prevented tenants from paying taxes to Makwani officials (Pradhan 1991:77). Within "Nepal" a similar scenario seems to have prevailed. For instance, the kingdoms of Patan and Makwanpur are

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54 I say this with the intention of distancing myself from overly idealistic descriptions of customary institutions which retail images of their being generative of cooperative social relations. Such descriptions can be found in some of the literature on development and common property resources. What they unselfconsciously seek to replicate is the simplistic divide between the colonial and pre-colonial, the former being a disruptive intervention in the rather romanticized and undifferentiated terrain of the latter (Chakravarty-Kaul 1996). Rather, I contend that when historicized, these arrangements reveal tensions; contradictions that were produced out of the deep impress of forces of culture, power and history. Understanding these tensions is necessary for any study of statemaking. These *diara* disputes persisted well into the nineteenth century and exist even today. For instance, District collectors in Champaran routinely meet with their counterparts in Nepal to resolve such disputes. Even within north India, such disputes can be detected on the riverine boundaries separating present-day districts. I am grateful to Abhay Mohan Jha and Archana Ojha for pointing this out to me. A detailed account of the boundary disputes between Gorkha and British India in the nineteenth century can be found in over fifty files in the Bihar State Archives. See, *Search Series—Nepal Champaran Boundary*, File 1-54, *BSA*.

55 See, Extracts of the Proceedings of Government of 9 and 16 July, 13 August, 26 November and 31 December, *FS* Consl. 13 March 1812, no. 41, *NAI*.

known to have had boundary disputes (Buchanan-Hamilton 1971 [1819]:167). Similarly, such practices seem to have been widespread in Gorkha's *tarriani* possessions. For instance, Bikha Chaudhari, a Tharu leader and one of the Gorkhali witnesses who testified during Young's investigation noted that while the residence of Gorkhali *subbās* in the Tarai was restricted by malaria (*aul*) to six months, they spent much of that time settling border disputes.[56]

Knotted Spaces and Tenurial Rights: The Disputed *Nankar* Lands of *Quanungo* Shivnath Singh

Some disputes, such as those emerging around the *nankar* lands of *quanungo* (record keeper) Shivnath Singh had peculiar spatial effects.[57] These lands, amounting to thirty-two *ṭolas* (supplementary hamlets lying outside the chief village), were granted in *nankar* to one Shivnath Singh who at one time seems to have held the office of *quanungo* in the old Makwani districts of Bara and Parsa. After the fall of Makwanpur in 1762, this area passed into Gorkha's hands. For some time after that the area remained under forest and constituted a pepper *mahal*. That is, Gorkhali authorities collected duties on the pepper collected from and sent to Kathmandu.[58] Later, Shivnath Singh was confirmed by Dal Mardan Shah, a brother of Prithvinarayan Shah.[59] Sometime during this period the forests were cleared and cultivation commenced. In 1793, Shivnath Singh

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56 *Monckton Report*. Cf. "Order regarding dispute between *Fauzdar* Bidesh Raut and Fakir Baksh in Bara Parsa, 1810 A.D.", RRC 40: 158. On the whole, the evidence of such boundary disputes is less forthcoming from Gorkhali records. This silence is more probably due to the paucity of detailed records of the kind we find generated by Company officials, than to a virtual absence of such practices of dispute.

57 *Nankar* lands are those lands enjoyed by officials such as *quanungos* in north India as their emoluments.

58 See, *Young Report; Monckton Report.*

59 Dal Mardan Shah, disgruntled brother of Prithvinarayan Shah, had since 1770 been resident at Bettiah. He returned to Kathmandu sometime after 1785 and was shortly thereafter granted a 5 year *ijara* of Bara-Parsa in 1786. See, *RRC* 25: 142\index. Dal Mardan Shah did not remain for long in that capacity as we hear that he soon entered into a quarrel with the *quanungos* and left the place. See, *RRS* (1988). Keeping this in mind, Shivnath Singh must have been confirmed sometime after 1786. And very possibly he is the same *quanungo* with whom Dal Mardan Shah quarreled.

simultaneously held the office of *mofussil quanungo* of *ṭappā* Nannor, *parganā* Simraon.[60]

Thus by 1793, an intriguing picture emerges. Shivnath Singh simultaneously held two offices of *quanungo*, granted *by two different states*. One of the offices had originated in an older and by then extinct state—Makwanpur. The *nankar* grant associated with this office was for performance of the services of *quanungo* in two districts (Bara and Parsa) that lay *within* the possessions of Gorkha, but the lands pertaining to this grant lay *outside* these districts and even the physical territory of Gorkha, but *within* the possessions of another (es)state–that of Bettiah and the Company. Around 1802, Gorkhali authorities abolished the office of the *quanungo* for the districts of Bara-Parsa. As part of these proceedings they resumed the thirty-two *ṭolas* (also known as Indurwa and Bilderwa?) and their lands "dependent" on the village of Narkattia. *Nankar* grants can be (in theory, at least) resumed by the granting authority upon the abolition of the office or the dismissal of the office-holder. In 1806 one Shakti Ballabh Padhya [Upadhyaya], *subba* of Bara-Parsa, was sent by Gorkhali authorities to investigate the proprietors' rights in Narkattia and to fix the boundary. This was accordingly accomplished. However, in 1814, Gorkhali authorities would disclaim the *subba's* activities arguing that he had been bribed by local people. Meanwhile, in 1808 Dashrath Khatri, the new *subbā* of Bara-Parsa, attacked and forcibly seized these lands. From then on, the descendants of Shivnath Singh, one Bhairo Dutt and Shankar Dutt took up the issue with the Company's authorities.

In 1814, the descendants of Shivnath Singh would claim that these lands lay in the *ṭappā* of Buhas (*parganā* Majhowa, *sarkār* Champaran), which lay in the territories of the Company. It is probable that by 1800 these "dependent" lands of Narkattia had become integral to *ṭappā* Buhas. This could have happened due to the expansion of the *ṭappā* through an expansion of its agrarian frontier. *Ṭappā* Buhas for long had remained an integral part of the Bettiah raj. And yet Kathmandu resumed these lands, sending officials to investigate a matter that pertained to an area that belonged to another state. This curious phenomenon might be explained by taking into account the fact that when the original *nankar* grant was made under the Makwani rulers, the lands in question (which were then forested) might have constituted a liminal zone on the emerging agrarian

60 The term *mofussil* refers to the countryside as opposed to the center or *sadr*. See, letter of J. Lumsden, Coll. of Saran to Governor-General in Council, 9 May 1793, *BOR* Procs. 13 May to 22 May, 1793, *BSA*.

frontier, never fully incorporated into any of the fiscal divisions of Champaran district.

It is possible then, that this region might have witnessed a Tharu-backed program of agrarian expansion that derived its tenurial basis from the Makwani rulers. The *nankar* grant itself might have been part of this unfolding process. In any case, in the end, the Makwani rulers conferred the *nankar* grant. But I must emphasize that even when such lands were physically separate, often they would be tenurially linked to some external authority that lay outside their own geographical location. The case of the thirty-two *ṭolas* and their lands dependent on the village of Narkattia is a classic case in point. Such fiscal practices were common in the pre-colonial Champaran-*tarriani* frontier and they inevitably knitted together patches of disjointed territory. Shivnath Singh's *nankar* right traversed a varied historical and spatial terrain to leave the grant in question, the grantee, and the two states of Gorkha and the Company hopelessly entangled at their edges.

Disputes over such grants also provide us with crucial insights into the spatial imagination of officials like the Gorkhali *Subba* Dashrath Khatri, who saw no inconsistency in entering into the territory of another kingdom to attach lands. That is, tenurially speaking, they saw a part of their state lying within the confines of another without any conflict being generated in their conception of the state. States could interpenetrate and that fact seems to have been recognized. In this context, the term "dependent", which recurs with frequency in the Company's official discourse, resonates with spatial codings. The term, I suspect, comes from the tendency of English officials to deploy indigenous revenue data and terminology to understand the complex tenurial relationships with which they were constantly confronted. But in the process of making it epistemologically visible they tended to spatialize this data, in the unperceived drive to generate an image of the state—an image that would be well defined, discernible, coherent and graspable. The dynamics discussed here were always unfolding all along the Company's frontier with other states, and therefore it should not be surprising that the Company state was plagued by boundary disputes all along its frontiers with Indian states. In this process of "knowing", Company officials, through a series of engagements spread over time and space would eventually reorder their states to produce the body of the modern state.

But if Gorkhali rulers were unconcerned about the question of intermixture of the territories of two states, they did at times entertain a more unified vision of the state. In 1783 Ran Bahadur would write to

Warren Hastings concerning the Gorkhali claim over *tappā* Rautahat and its "*jāgirdār*" Mirza Abdulla Beg, saying, "I have in my country many *jāgirdārs* to whom I have granted *jāgirs*; If orders are sent to these *jāgirdārs* similar to those which Mirza Abdulla has obtained, how can my government exist ? *How can one government exist within another.*"[61] However, even in this instance, one suspects that Ran Bahadur is not talking about the state in terms of its spatial layout, but rather in terms of the king-centric hierarchical relationships that constituted it. And indeed, viewing the state as a nexus of shifting relationships is a useful way to theorize about pre-colonial states in south Asia—not only to explain their emergence and breakdown—but also to account for their deeply entangled and knotted geographies.

In this case, while the Gorkhali rājā may have had a point in stating that, theoretically at least, it was difficult for a single *jāgirdār* to have two masters, the situation in reality was much more complicated. And this was often due to the ambiguous tenurial location of agents like Mirza Abdulla Beg and local officials like *quanungo* Shivnath Singh. The Beg himself had constituted and reconstituted his relationships with superior authorities spanning at least three states.[62] Thus the point remains, even though the Gorkhali rājā refused to concede it, that in reality–on the ground–pre-colonial governments (or their agents) could, in all sorts of complicated ways, *exist within one another.* The case of *quanungo* Shivnath Singh, discussed above bears ample testimony to this fact.

3. Conclusion

This paper has attempted to trace the relationships that produced the intermixed geographies of pre-colonial states along what is now, although its precise lines of demarcation remain a subject of dispute at many points, unproblematically called the "Nepal-India border". To achieve this, I have provided evidence from the Champaran-*tarriani* frontier to show that

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61 See, Translation of letter from Rān Bahadur Shah, *rājā* of Gorkha to Warren Hastings, Governor-General of Bengal, n.d., *PGGCB*, Procs. 18 July 1783, no. 20B, pp. 1690-92, *WBSA*, emphasis mine.

62 Another example of this would be the *rājā* of Palpa, who by 1800 was dependent of the *Nawāb* of Awadh, Gorkha and the Company. Obviously, where such complicated relationships existed, there would be considerable scope for dispute. Thus it comes as no surprise that in the lead up to the Anglo-Gorkha war of 1814-16, a nexus of such relationships that organized fiscal space on the Butwal-Gorakhpur frontier generated similar spatial dilemmas that would have a direct bearing on the outbreak of the war.

the fiscal divisions that straddled this region possessed blurred and interlocked edges. The fluctuating tenurial histories of fiscal divisions such as *tappā* Rautahat combined with the practices of local agents operating within specific configurations of culture, power and history, led to the production of their knotted and intermixed bodies. Both the Company state and Gorkha acquired through conquest territories that were organized through fiscal discourses and practices that rarely respected or retained the spatial integrity, compactness, and bodily coherence of the various fiscal divisions into which these territories were carved.

In this sense, the claim that in the eighteenth century, Gorkha's elite conceived of their state in spatially coherent terms needs to be reexamined. Gorkhali records of the eighteenth and early nineteenth century often couch references to the Gorkhali and other states in terms of such metaphors as *ḍhungo* (literally 'stone'). Such references clearly pertain to a notion of the state that was distinct from the personage of the king. Some scholars have suggested that in referring to the state as an entity distinct from the king, Gorkhali elites were emphasizing the territorial integrity of the state in the modern sense of the term (see Regmi 1995:15). However, the evidence from Gorkha's *tarai* does not bear this out.[63]

The "spatial" practices discussed earlier created problems of governance for central authorities from both the Gorkha and Company states.[64] But there was one crucial difference. Company officials do seem to have possessed a panoptic vision of the space of the state, even though in 1814 they did not possess the manpower to conduct extensive surveys of their territories and accurately demarcate its internal divisions. This panoptic vision is very visible in official discourse of the period. That is, much of the Company's official discourse seems to have been premised on a distinctively spatial notion of the state—states possessed an objectified body that could be viewed from "above" and represented on maps with their internal divisions and sub-divisions clearly demarcated. When

63 I am grateful to Mahesh C. Regmi for his generosity and his willingness to discuss this and other matters with me.

64 By 'spatial practices' I mean those practices that have implications for the organization and knowledge of space. This closely approximates Lefebvre's notion of spatial practices which denotes the ways in which people generate, use and perceive space (Lefebvre 1991: 42). Such a conception of spatial practice has also been read into the anthropologists' traditional practice of "doing" fieldwork (Clifford 1997). Both Gorkha and the Company state sent a number of officials at various times to survey land holding and investigate tenurial claims. They are too numerous to detail here.

confronted with the bundles of meaning and practice that went into the production of pre-colonial fiscal divisions, Company officials had a difficult time trying to grasp the contours of the fiscal divisions they administered. These problems surfaced with the Company's formal acquisition of territories in 1765. By 1814, just prior to the outbreak of the war, Company officials had yet to grasp the spatial dynamics of these discourses and practices. They possessed no easy solutions to these spatial dilemmas.[65]

By emphasizing these preoccupations with spatiality in my narrative, I hope to have unveiled some of the deep seated practices that went into the organization and knowledge of pre-colonial fiscal divisions. These details (with all their semantic, spatial and social implications) need to be integrated into any account of processes of statemaking on the Anglo-Gorkha frontier. Moreover, such practices and the inability of Company officials to discern their spatial effects have important ramifications for our understanding of the Anglo-Gorkha war.

In the exchanges that ensued between the two states prior to the war, each would accuse the other of complicity and intransigence, both missing the crucial point about spatiality which was, in the final analysis, the referent in question. The discourse of conflict couched in tropes such as "the predatory system of the Goorkhas," or "the machinations of the Company's petty zamīndārs", "ill disposed" towards Gorkha, was actually a highly spatial one, revolving as it did around the organization and knowledge of space. But in the abrasive interfacing of two semantic worlds, at a critical moment of cross-cultural encounter, issues of spatiality eluded the vision of officials belonging to both states. Since both parties to the war displayed a lack of awareness of the spatial issues they were grappling with, one is tempted to conclude that the Anglo-

65 One possible way out was through projects of surveying. However, till at least 1822, the Company seems to have been reluctant to pursue this option. This was probably because Company officials were stilling grappling with the revenue data they possessed, attempting to derive spatially coherent images of the state. Moreover, they did not possess the required manpower and finances to undertake such an ambitious project. By 1822 the Company's officials would have gained sufficient administrative experience to realize that the data they possessed and the pre-colonial fiscal practices they constantly encountered would continue to make their attempts to grasp the "body" of the state they had acquired an elusive project. Regulation VII of 1822 would require that henceforth systematic surveys be undertaken in order to uncover the revenue geography of the state and objectify it on a cadastral map.

Gorkha war occupies one important—but ambiguous—moment within a larger unfolding project of territorial reordering initiated in South Asia under colonial rule.

This conclusion clearly cautions us to the pitfalls of simple cause and effect analyses such as have been typical of studies on the war. It is also integral to the analysis of social transformation in the period more generally. One could argue that in the production of social life human actors, while reproducing structures (the space of pre-colonial states through pre-colonial revenue discourses and practices) might actually end up transforming them in the long run, and that while they might be implicated in the (re)production of these emergent structures (the geographical representation of the modern state) they might not be fully aware of their own complicity in the process.

What happened to the pre-colonial fiscal divisions such as *ṭappās* and *parganās* in the two states? Since the establishment of the Company's territorial rule in this region in 1765, its officials had attempted to "know" its territories, and wherever visible, smoothen out the wrinkles and untie the knots that marked the fiscal geography of its territories. But it was only in the 1840s (in the Company's territories) and the twentieth century (in "Gorkha") that the two states would "see"—using the technology of the modern map—the spatial architecture of these fiscal divisions.[66]

However, on the Company side there is evidence that its district officers had become aware earlier of the spatial irregularities of the divisions under their charge. This is clearly evident in the 1790's when Collectors supervising the administration of a number of districts in Bengal began to transfer villages between collectorates with the explicit purpose of rendering their respective divisions compact with well defined edges.[67] Such territorial realignments, which could be effected with relatively greater ease within the Company's territories than on its frontiers, would continue well into the twentieth century.

These practices constitute unstudied moments in the historical geography of statemaking in South Asia. In this connection, the attempt to create the geographical template of the modern state was not the sole

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66 Evidence of this is plentiful in Company records, especially in the *parganā* maps prepared by revenue surveyors in the nineteenth century. On the Gorkhali side such evidence is less forthcoming, primarily due to the paucity of records of this kind.

67 See, for instance, the printed indexes to the Board of Revenue records from 1790 onwards, *WBSA*.

outcome of mapping strategies (Edney 1997). Complementing these mapping exercises is a story of the spatial dilemmas faced by Company officials in the course of their engagements with pre-colonial tenurial relationships and fiscal practices. At the level of everyday governance, Company officials responded by adopting techniques of surveying and territorial exchange, so as to produce the geographical template of the modern state—occupying a definite portion of the earth's surface and divided and sub-divided into non-overlapping divisions and sub-divisions.

The Anglo-Gorkha war occupies a crucial moment in this larger process of territorial reordering. It emerged out of questions pertaining to the spatial integrity of fiscal divisions lying on an inter-state frontier, and it ended with this fuzzy frontier being demarcated—the territories of the two states being henceforth separated by a line, and the integrity of the line maintained by the force of violence.

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Glossary

birtā	tax free grants made by the state to individuals usually on an inheritable basis
fauzdār	an official charged with the police jurisdiction of criminal matters
gosaīn	strictly speaking a Shaivite monk, but applied broadly in this period to various mendicant groups and orders in the Gangetic plains and beyond into "Nepal."
ijārā	a contract for the collection of revenue
jāgir	land assigned to government employees usually in lieu of cash salary
jāgirdār	a holder of a *jāgir* land grant
kājī	a senior member of Gorkha's ruling elite, higher in rank than a *sardār* and in charge of civil and military affairs
mālguzār	a person paying revenues to government
mokhtar	legal agent
nankar	rights to lands enjoyed by officials such as *quanungos* in north India as their emoluments

parganā/ praganna	fiscal division in north India which could be further sub-divided into *tappās* or *mauzās* (villages)
parwaṇa	official order
quanungo/ quanungoye	record keeper
sardār	a high ranking civil and military officer
subbā	chief provincial administrator, usually in charge of a district in Gorkha
syāhāmohar	historical documents belonging to the Sen rājās bearing a black seal
ṭappā/ ṭappe	a small tract or division of country, smaller than a *parganā*, comprising of a number of villages
tarāf	a fiscal subdivision including several villages
vakil	envoy, pleader, representative
zamīndār	a landlord or person authorized to collect revenue

Abbreviations

BL	British Library, London
BSA	Bihar State Archives
Coll.	Collector
Consl.	Consultation
FS	Foreign Secret
KRR	Kathmandu Residency Records
Magst.	Magistrate
NAI	National Archives of India, Delhi
NAN	National Archives of Nepal, Kathmandu
OIOC	Oriental and India Office Collections
PGGCB	Proceedings of the Governor-General in Council in Bengal
Procs.	Proceedings
RRC	Regmi Research Collection
RRS	Regmi Research Series
WBSA	West Bengal State Archives, Calcutta

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WITH LOVE AND AESTHETICS: NOTES FOR AN ETHICAL TRANSLATION OF NEPALI LITERATURE

Manjushree Thapa

1. Translation in a Multilingual Land

Central Bureau of Statistics documents list the country's 32-odd languages as being: Nepali, Maithili, Bhojpuri, Newari, Gurung, Tamang, Abadhi, Tharu, Magar, Limbu, Rai/Kirati, Sherpa, Thakali, Rajbansi, Satar, Danuwar, Santhal, Hindi, Urdu, Chepang, Thami, Bengali, Majhi, Dhimal, Jhangar, Marwadi, Kumhale, Darai, Jirel, Byanshi, Raji, English, other local languages and other foreign languages (His Majesty's Government 1999:17-31). Some languages spoken in Nepal, like upper Mustang's Tibetan Loba dialect, are not listed at all by the Bureau, or are perhaps meant to be indicated by presumably broader categories like "Sherpa". By contrast, a proposal authored by the National Languages Policy Advisory Board lists 71 languages and dialects in Nepal: 9 with scripts, 12 developing scripts, 30 lacking any script and 20 on the verge of extinction (Rastriyabhasa Niti Sujhav Ayog 2050 v.s.:57-58). And then again, an independent document produced by the Summer Institute of Linguistics lists 125 languages in the country, apparently not differentiating between languages and dialects.[1]

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1 Because the SIL document gives a good sense of exactly how multilingual the Nepali experience of language can be, I list below the tongues it has identified in Nepal: Athpariya, Awadhi, Bagheli, Bahing, Bantawa, Baraamu, Baragaunle, Belhariya, Bhojpuri, Bodo, Bote-Majhi, Byangsi, Camling, Chantel, Chaudangsi, Chepang, Chhathar, Chhintang, Chhulung, Chourase, Chukwa, Darai, Darmiya, Dhanwar, Dhimal, Dolpo, Dumi, Dungmali, Dzongkha, Ghale, Northern Ghale, Southern Ghale, Gharti, Gurung, Eastern Gurung, Helambu Sherpa, Hindi, Humla Bhotia, Janggali, Jerung, Jirel, Kagate, Kaike, Kayort, Khaling, Gamale Kham, Maikoti Kham, Nisi Kham, Sheshi Kham, Takale Kham, Koi, Kulung, Kumauni, Kumhali, Nepali Kurux, Kusanda, Kyerung, Lambichhong, Lepcha, Lhomi, Limbu, Lingkhim, Lopa, Northern Lorung, Southern Lorung, Lumba-Yakkha, Eastern Magar, Western Magar, Maithili, Dehati Maithili, Majhi, Manangba, Eastern Meohang, Western Meohang, Mugu, Mundari, Musasa, Naapa, Nachering, Nar Phu, Nepalese Sign Language, Nepali, Newari, Nubri, Olangchung Gola, Palpa, Panchgaunle,

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Statistics vary, then, on just how multilingual Nepal is: but it is beyond dispute that Nepal speaks many languages. It is also beyond dispute that each of Nepal's languages is influenced by others; none of the languages of the nation is "pure."[2]

Because bilingualism, trilingualism, and partial fluency in many languages is so prevalent in the country, translation is a vital everyday act in Nepal's national discourse. In *The Ear of the Other*, Jacques Derrida notes the complexity of the "internal translation" to which the body submits. "Like everyone," he states, "I always try, I think, to translate or to translate myself—to autotranslate" (Derrida 1985:156). Few in Nepal do not live intimately with continual attempts at auto-translation, using one language for love and another for commerce or for intellectual discussions, for government dealings, or even for simple neighborly greetings. The Nepali subject is always constituted in translation.

Surprisingly little contemporary Nepali literature tends to reflect this fact. Writers like Manu Brajaki, Sanat Regmi and Ismali have been deliberate in writing bilingual subjects, sometimes accommodating readers with footnoted translations and at other times expecting readers to share their subjects' bilingualism. Other Nepali writers do borrow occasional phrases or expressions from national and international languages. Yet the contemporary literature of Nepal, whether in Nepali or in other national languages, largely tends towards the monolingual, depicting in effect a linguistic purity not evidenced in Nepali daily life.[3]

My own examination of the English translation of Nepali literature takes place in recognition of the inherent impurity of languages, and in acknowledgment of the constant translation and auto-translation within

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Phangduwali, Pongyong, Puma, Rajbangsi, Raji, Rangkas, Raute, Saam, Sangpang, Santali, Sherpa, Sonha, Sunwar, Eastern Tamang, Eastern Gorkha Tamang, Northwestern Tamang, Southwestern Tamang, Thakali, Thami, Chitwan Tharu, Dang Tharu, Deokri Tharu, Kathoriya Tharu, Mahotari Tharu, Rana Thakur Tharu, Saptari Tharu, Thudam Bhote, Thulung, Tibetan, Tichorong, Tilung, Tseku, Tsum, Vayu, Waling, Yakha, Yamphe, Yamphu (Grimes 1996).

2 This linguistic truism is emphasized by Derrida: "There is impurity in every language" (Derrida 1985:100). For a discussion on some Persian and Arabic, Hindi, English and Tibeto-Burmese imprints on the Nepali language, see *Modern Literary Nepali: an Introductory Reader* (Hutt 1997:37-39).

3 Throughout this paper the term "Nepali literature" will refer to literature in any of the languages of Nepal. By contrast, "Nepali-language literature" will refer to literature in the Nepali language.

which the Nepali subject is constituted. It is also central to this paper's perspective that the translator is both a subject and an agent of the many migrations—scattering and gatherings both within and outside national borders—that are forming contemporary Nepal, migrations similar to those that critic Homi Bhabha describes in his own post-national experience:

> I have lived that moment of the scattering of people that in other times and other places, in the nations of others, becomes a time of gathering. Gatherings of exiles and émigrés and refugees, gatherings on the edge of "foreign" cultures; gathering at the frontiers; gatherings in the ghettos or cafes of city centres; gathering in the half-life, half-light of foreign tongues, or in the uncanny fluency of another's language; gathering the signs of approval and acceptance, degrees, discourses, disciplines; gathering the memories of underdevelopment, of other worlds lived retroactively; gathering the past in a ritual of revival; gathering the present. Also the gathering of the people in the diaspora: indentured, migrant, interned...(Bhabha 1990b:291).

The translator of Nepali literature into English participates in one of the most significant linguistic migrations currently taking place in the country. English arrived late in Nepal in comparison to India, perhaps not coinciding with, but surely increasing with the start of dialogue with the British East India Company. The 1802 establishment of the British Residency in Kathmandu, the 1816 Treaty of Sugauli (and the start of Gurkha recruitment by the British in India), and Jung Bahadur's 1850 visit to England must have done their part to deepen the language's hold in a few power centers. In a *Journal of Nepalese Studies* article on the translation between English and Nepali, translation specialist Govinda Raj Bhattarai mentions the influence of Perso-Arabic and Western literature on Nepali literature, beginning in this period (Bhattarai 1999:63).[4]

While many Nepalis abroad and a few select Nepalis in Nepal seem to have learned the language in the pre-1950 period, arguably, English did not spread roots within the country till its inclusion in the post-democracy formal education curriculum. Tribhuvan University's faculty for higher education in English was established a mere 40 years ago, in

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4 Bhattarai's article contains a valuable discussion on the history of migrations between English and Nepali languages in the literary production of the country. He mentions that while the initial translation work that took place in the 1950's was generally limited to translation *into* Nepali, the 1960's saw the beginning of a reversal of this trend (Bhattarai 1999:63-67).

1959. It is thus very recently that English became part of Nepal's national discourse.

Importantly, though, English has circulated in the domain of the country's most privileged classes since its arrival. Lacking any significant population for whom it is a mother tongue, the language has occupied a strange position in Nepal: powerful but sequestered, vastly influential but limited to a few centers of economic ascendancy. With the post-1950's establishment of the development industry, English has come to occupy a central and disproportionately influential position in national discourse. The fact that English is the language of communication between multinational corporations also helps entrench the language in today's Nepal. Its widespread presence today among national intellectuals, business people and powerbrokers, as well as among foreign academics and long-time expatriates, the staff of embassies, donor agencies and NGO/INGOs makes the language alien and inborn both, Nepali and not-Nepali all at once.

This split dynamic is not unique to Nepal. Transplanted in the sub-continent before British rule and thriving on colonialism, English has become, in the post-colonial period, invasive throughout South Asia, growing side-by-side with and often grafting with other "indigenous" languages.[5]

Despite the fact that its speakers share a class rather than an ethnic identity, English has been cultivated widely enough for Salman Rushdie to call it an Indian language (Rushdie 1997:54). By this measure English is equally Romesh Gunesekara's Sri Lankan language and Bapsi Sidhwa's Pakistani language and the language of other former British colonies. By this same measure it is also a language belonging to all nations now, the language not just of administration and global discourse but of national and international currency, the dollar standard against which other languages value and devalue. A country like Nepal thus finds itself speaking English with increasing urgency. The 1980's and 1990's proliferation of English-medium "boarding schools" throughout the nation is one obvious testament to this fact.

This context of current-day linguistic migrations—and the language politics it implies—raises important ethical questions for the translator of

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5 In *The Rhetoric of English India* Sara Suleri (1992) makes an important distinction between the rhetoric of English India and of *colonial* English India. This is a useful document for those who might too hastily equate the import of English with colonialism.

Nepali literature into English. I will return to these questions at the end of this paper, after examining, first, the ethical considerations that arise out of translated language itself.

2. The (Mis)Translation of Nepali Literature

Following Laxmi Prasad Devkota's 1950's English writings and translations, the translation of Nepali literature into English seems to have flowered in the 1960's. Some pioneering translators from that early period include Tirtha Raj Tuladhar, Madhav Lal Karmacharya, Tejratna Kansakar and Madhusudan Devcota. The 1970's saw the appearance of new translators like Tanka Vilas Varya and Sondra Zeidenstein. The Royal Nepal Academy also began to contribute towards translation efforts at this time, with undertakings such as the 1975 publication of *Seven Poets* edited by Tulsi Diwas and translated by Daman Raj Tuladhar and Daniel Khaling.[6] In the 1980's, translators such as M Harun Ansari, Shailendra K Singh, Greta Rana, Yuyutsu RD Sharma and David Rubin began to make further contributions, and in the 1990's there has been a steady increase in the translation of Nepali literature into English, with translators like Keshar Lall, Tara Nath Sharma, Michael Hutt, Abhi Subedi, Padma P. Devkota, Wayne Amtzis, Larry Hartsell, Pallav Ranjan and Para Limbu among others making selections of classical and contemporary literary works from Nepal available to the English reader. Ann Hunkins, Shanti Mishra, Maya Watson, Mary Des Chene, Samrat Upadhya and myself are newer literary translators entering the field. Presumably, the translation of Nepali literature will continue to increase in the coming decades, through both public and private initiatives.[7]

Anyone who has grappled with the task of translation has experienced the difficulties posed by grammatical variations between languages, by

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6 Bhattarai is critical of the role of institutions such as the Royal Nepal Academy and Sajha Prakashan in the early translation of Nepali literature into English. Till his article's 1999 publication date, he notes that the Academy has published only four such books—"Hardly one work a decade in average"—and Sajha only one. He does mention that the Academy, in particular, is currently making greater efforts on this front. He also mentions the prominent role that various diplomatic missions have played in the translation of Nepali literature into foreign languages (Bhattarai 1999:67-69).

7 For a more extensive listing of Nepali literature in translation, see the bibliography prepared by Mary Des Chene and Bhaskar Gautam (this issue). Bhattarai's article also contains a good survey of the translation of Nepali poetry and prose into English (Bhattarai 1999:68-73)

incompatible vocabularies, syntaxes and grammars, by differing connotations to similar words, by unfamiliar social, cultural and historical references, by local idioms and expressions, by metaphors and onomatopoeic words, by complex intertextual narratives, and by the varied inflections, rhythms and tones possible in different languages. These difficulties are not mere challenges to be overcome; in fact they stump the very enterprise of translation. To give just one example of a structural failure of translation: a translated text is rarely able to show the imprint of the many languages that exist within any original language. As Derrida points out, "At best, [translation] can get everything across except this: the fact that there are, in one linguistic system, perhaps several languages or tongues. Sometimes—I would even say always—several tongues" (Derrida 1985:100). This and other difficulties presented by translation rarely find satisfactory solutions.

There are, in language, three "tiers"—rhetoric, logic and silence—which operate in any act of translation. These tiers are described by Marxist feminist critic Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak as an arena in which the individual translator stages her agency. The tremendous freedom implied by this formulation requires much self-awareness of the translator-agent: "That takes a different kind of effort from taking translation to be a matter of synonym, syntax and local color" (Spivak 1993:181). Throughout this paper I will be referring to these terms—rhetoric, logic and silence—in discussing individual examples of translation. I will also be adopting Spivak's definition of the translator-as-agent in order to examine the ethical responsibility that comes with certain technical choices made in translation.

The two technical alternatives I will refer to throughout the paper are interlingual (common or literal) translation; and intralingual strategies like paraphrasing or explaining, which are aimed at revealing the less obvious meanings not expressed by the first perhaps simpler act.[8]

These two strategies do not always lead to success: they usually remain, in fact, inadequate to their task. For example, consider Manu Brajaki's bilingual stories: " कहिलेकाहीं ऊ भन्छे, भैया! कहु ल, पापी पेटके खातिर हम यी परम्परा आ ढकोसला वेच देली..." (Brajaki 2052 v.s.:89). A literal interlingual translation might capture the logic of that sentence, but

8 I adopt here Roman Jacobson's definition of the act of translation. A third alternative identified by Jacobson is to translate intersemiotically from one medium, like a visual one for example, to another, like an aural one (Derrida 1985:95, 131). This third alternative is not relevant to the discussion in this paper.

would fail to reflect its bilingualism, and thus fail to reflect its rhetorical complexity. As for intralingual strategies, there are a variety of options available to the translator including footnoting, italicizing, explaining with short asides, maybe even keeping the original language to show something of the original text's bilingualism. Yet as any translator knows, each of these options is inadequate in its own way, each disrupts the translation's rhetoric in different ways, each is ultimately flawed. I will not explore such flaws here, as examples of such will be found throughout this section.

Indeed the one truth of translation is that there can be no successful translation; all attempts at translation inevitably fail. Polysemic texts yield no fixed meanings in their original language—by extension, any "correct" translation becomes impossible. The impossibility of correct translation comes from what Derrida calls the "proper noun effect" of words, an effect inherent to each word (Derrida 1985:102). Writing *uncle,* for example, the translator creates quite another character from a Nepali मामा (*māmā*, maternal uncle) or काका (*kākā*, paternal uncle), whose identities are partly rooted in distinct family roles. To a greater or lesser extent, the proper noun effects of the words मामा and काका refuse to translate. Simply writing *maternal uncle* or *paternal uncle* in English can easily make a text sound stiff and sociological, and false to the rhetoric of the original literary work. In addition, *maternal uncle, paternal uncle* and *uncle* alike remain silent on the cultural identities written into the words मामा and काका. Uncle. Maternal uncle. Paternal uncle. All options are flawed, but one must be chosen. Like a proper noun, the words dfdf and sfsf thus bear a refusal to translate.

The proper noun effect of words forces a dilemma upon the translator because it makes texts demand: "Translate me and what is more don't translate me. I desire that you translate me, that you translate the name I impose on you; and at the same time, whatever you do, don't translate it, you will not be able to translate it" (Derrida 1985:102). It is important to realize that the translator's agency operates, then, within a field of errors. Derrida is categorical in his statement: "A translation never succeeds" (1985:124). The translator (mis)translates by choosing one "error" over another, maybe even choosing one error-system over another.

In the rest of this section I will examine some of the ways in which translators of Nepali literature have "erred" over the proper noun effect of original Nepali literary texts. I will trace the persistence of the proper noun effect, and examine the range of technical solutions that translators of Nepali literature have deployed in response. In attempting these

solutions, translators stage their agency, and in the process reveal something of the desire motivating the current drive to translation.

The Nepali Subject in Translation

Character names provide the most obvious examples of the proper noun effect, containing as they do much significance rooted in their original language. For example, when Govinda Bahadur Malla names his protagonist Misri in *Pallo Gharko Jhyāl*, he immediately evokes the simplicity and childishness associated with the sugar-candy *misrī* (Malla 2018 v.s.). Only the bilingual reader of Larry Hartsell's translation *The Window of the House Opposite* will get these connotations, however (Malla 1998). Similarly, the connotations of names like Gore (Koirala 1997:37-42), Kanchhi (Koirala 1984) and Lukhure (Hutt 1993:244-252) remain lost to the English reader when they do not come with explanations. Michael Hutt faces the problem of translating names in "The Murderer", Indra Bahadur Rai's story based on the confusion between an officer named Bhalu and a bear or a *bhālu*. Here, the translator's solution is to footnote the first appearance of the word *bhālu*—yet something is clearly lost by the reader's inability to participate in the original-language aural confusion between the two references to *bhālu* (Hutt 1993:224-230).[9]

The untranslateability of names poses problems beyond a certain flattening of language, for a character's national, ethnic and caste identities are signified by surnames. While native speakers can be expected to decipher these identities in the original text, it must be presumed that the non-native reader cannot tell the difference between a Shrestha and a Jyapu, for example, in a translated text. And so in Keshar Lall's translation of BP Koirala's story "Down to the Terai", Bhote remains just a name rather than an indication of the character's ethnic identity (Koirala 1997:37-42), while in Hutt's translation of the same story "To the Lowlands," the name comes with an accompanying footnote: "The

9 All references throughout this section are limited to four works easily available in Kathmandu's bookstores: the anthology *Himalayan Voices* by Michael Hutt, BP Koirala's short story collection *Faulty Glasses* translated by Keshar Lall, and Shankar Koirala's *Khaireni Ghat* and Govinda Bahadur Malla's *The Window of the House Opposite*, these latter novels both translated by Larry Hartsell.

characters of this story are named...Bhote, 'the Tibetan'..." (Hutt 1993:202).[10]

As in this example, Hutt tends to favor the use of footnotes to explain names, particularly characters' caste identities. There is however a limit to what he can explain. In his translation of Ramesh Vikal's story "A Splendid Buffalo," readers are not given caste explanations for surnames such as Dhakal, a Bahun name. While the lack of footnoting in this example helps the story read more fluently than his more heavily footnoted work, it also makes the story, which is based on specific caste hierarchies, lose much of its social context (Hutt 1993:244-252). In order to avoid just such a problem, in the translation of *Khairenī Ghāṭ* excerpted below, Hartsell adds an explanation not found in the original text: "A little closer, on the top of a hill, Dumja village could witness the place where the Jaisi Koiralas, Chhetri Koiralas, Upadhyaya Koiralas—*all upper caste people*—crowded a Majhi feast..." (Koirala 1984:24; emphasis mine). The translator's intention is clearly to make the village's caste relations read to the English audience. Interestingly, while he identifies all the upper caste characters as such, he leaves Majhi identity unexplained.

The proper noun effect is also very much in evidence when the translator comes up against the Nepali language's extensive kinship bonds. "Your father's new wife," is how Hartsell paraphrases "तेरी कान्छी आमा" (Koirala 1984:9). Inadequate as this choice is, the literal option is worse: your younger mother. This would not only sound odd, it would also require an awkward explanation that the woman is the father's newest wife, one among others still in matrimony. While some translators might consider such explanations—especially those in footnotes—to be a failure in translating the original's rhetoric, others prefer them as a means to access the original's logic. In Manu Brajaki's "A Small Fish Squats by the Dhobi Khola," Hutt footnotes the meaning of the term *Bajai Āmā*, lending a stiff sociological tone to the text: "Her name is a combination of *bajai*, 'grandmother,' and *āmā*, 'mother'" (Hutt 1993:298). Translators are not always consistent in their technical choices. In "A Living Death," for example, Hutt decides not to explain the same (but differently-spelled) term *bajyai* (Hutt 1993:304).

Should the translator explain or not? Use footnotes or not? Or simply mark the original term's untranslateability with italics? Such questions also arise when kinship terms like *didī*, *dāi* etc. refer not to actual family

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10 The name might also refer to someone who looks Tibetan in features, but isn't actually Tibetan.

members but to those addressed as such, as is customarily done in much of Nepal. But even this problem may be too complex to demonstrate exactly how intractable the proper noun effect of words can be. Even when a simple term like *didī* refers literally to an older sister, for example, the translator must choose between the vague but (relatively) natural-sounding term "sister" or the precise but stiff term "older sister." In a similar instance, Hartsell translates आमै as a very American-sounding "Ma."—mother being too stiff, and mom, mum or mommy being equally inappropriate to reflect the informality and warmth of आमै (Koirala 1984). By contrast, in another work, the same translator lets his characters refer to each other quite woodenly as "Mother," and "Sister-in-law" (Malla 1998). Both choices have their own successes, their own failures.

In translated Nepali literature, translators also grapple—again, sometimes inconsistently—with the problem of indicating a character's social position. Throughout *Himalayan Voices* Hutt leaves the relatively simple term *hākim* (boss) largely untranslated, though he does footnote the more intricate terms *subbā* and *mukhiyā*: "A *mukhiyā* is a government official of the third rank; a *subbā* is a government official one rank higher than a *mukhiyā*" (Hutt 1993:217). But then, in "A Splendid Buffalo," he decides not to translate the title *dwāre,* leaving the reader ignorant of the fact that the main character is a local land tax collector (Hutt 1993:244). Such inconsistency itself reveals the confounding quality of translated language. Arguably, inconsistency may be necessary in certain cases. The term of address हजूर (*hajur*), for instance, which indicates so much about Nepali subjectivity, may actually require inconsistency in its translation. Depending upon its context, the term can connote master, leader, superior, boss etc. as a noun; as an expression of agreement, it has particularly slavish connotations. Hutt's repeated use of the British-smacking term "Sir" in its stead (Hutt 1993:251, 252) speaks amply of the inadequacy of interlingual and intralingual strategies to reveal both the logic and the rhetoric of the original text. Instead it is silence which comes to the fore. Silence necessarily marks the translated text.

A few final examples of the difficulties presented by Nepali subjectivity in translation:

As all translators know, expressions and colloquialisms make a character's utterances a considerable challenge to translate. A surprising number of characters greet each other with "Hello" in Hutt's translations (1993:275, 299). Occasionally they stick with Nepali expressions like "chi!" (Hutt 1993:211) while at other times they utter such translatese as "Hail Narayan" (Hutt 1993:193). Again, inconsistency marks translated

texts. While sometimes Hutt chooses a strategy of loose paraphrase, at other times he is more exacting in his search for a literal translation. One such example is seen when he grimly footnotes his word choice for the truly difficult-to-translate term *sala*:

> *Sālā pahāḍ*: I have translated this as bastard *(sālā)* hills *(pahāḍ)*. *Sālā*, with the basic meaning of "brother-in-law," is a common term of abuse. By addressing a man as *sālā*, one implies that one has had sexual relations with his sister. The term is also applied adjectivally to any object deserving of contempt, an application that is far beyond the original meaning (Hutt 1993:156).

Here Hutt is clearly dissatisfied with his own inaccurate paraphrase; but opting for "brother-in-law hills" or marring the text (in this case, the title of a Min Bahadur Bista poem) with a lengthy explanation would obviously be much more dissatisfying. *Sālā* must then remain silent in the translated text.

Silence, too, comes to the foreground in many instances of translated metaphors and similes, and in the translation of onomatopoeic words. In a 1991 *Nepalese Linguistics* article, Hutt lists such eminently untranslatable words encountered during his efforts at translation: "*saryāk suruk, gadryākgudruk, gaḍyaṅ.guḍuṅ...*" (Hutt 1991:21). If a comic effect is not intended, such words are perhaps best met with silence by the translator.

In the examples above, translators can be seen seeking a variety of interlingual and intralingual solutions to the problem posed by their subjects' proper noun effect. They have considerable freedom in choosing how to stage their agency. However, though they pursue, quite doggedly, the logic and rhetoric of the original text, failure is written all over their (mis)translations. The Nepali subject-in-translation that results appears as a quixotic figure, a rare hybrid species that can be sighted only in the liminal spaces between meaning and unmeaning.

Nepal in Translation

The proper noun effect of words is also very much in evidence in the (mis)translation of the physical world of Nepali literature. Again, translators take many, and often inconsistent tacks to get at the logic or rhetoric they desire. Though in places Hutt footnotes geographical names like Lucknow, Ilam and Sunkosi, elsewhere he leaves places like Assam and Darjeeling unexplained (Hutt 1993). Even without inconsistencies within a single text, the physical world of Nepal reads, in translated

literature, as peculiarly displaced. The land is filled with such plants as "wild plum and custard apple trees" which may be technically accurate, but sound distinctly unfamiliar to Nepali ears (Koirala 1984:24). Alternately there may be half-translated "banyan and *pīpal* trees" in the landscape (Hutt 1993:224), or a most scientific "jamun tree (Eugenia jambos)" (Koirala 1997:48). The terrain of Nepal-in-translation is divided into copiously footnoted *ropanīs* and *bighās* (Hutt 1993:203, 294), and on the trails are similarly footnoted *chautārās* and *dharamshālās* (Hutt 1993:194, 221). Some of the houses may have exotic *pujā* rooms instead of mere prayer rooms (Malla 1998:5). Their kitchens may be stocked with conspicuously translated maize-beer (Koirala 1984) or conspicuously untranslated *chiurā* (Malla 1998:3).

All of these examples show the linguistic disorientation that occurs when the physical world of Nepali literature gets (mis)translated into English. The nation, in its physicality, totters unstably between languages, between meanings and half-meanings and unmeaning. In translated Nepal literature, the physical presence of the country seems to buckle and warp.

Cultural Narratives in Translation

In the translation of any literary text, perhaps it is most difficult to write in something of the cultural narratives that echo through the original work. No work of literature stands on its own, most certainly not the intertextual works of Nepali literature which often echo cultural narratives inherited from religious and secular texts, and from fables, parables, tales, expressions and common social discourse. In trying to give English-language expression to these cultural narratives, translators once again resort to footnoting, italicizing, explaining briefly, digressing with lengthy asides, or at times remaining silent. In particular, the need to explain (and the tendency to over- or under-explain) becomes most pressing when the translator faces the problem of cultural narratives.

Some examples of over-explaining come from Hutt's painstaking footnoting of any reference which threatens to remain silent to the English reader. Sometimes such footnotes are helpful, sometimes not. For example, the saying "A Brahman who has never eaten a mushroom can never know its flavor" is perhaps unnecessarily footnoted: "This proverb refers to the fact that some highly orthodox Brahmans refrain

from eating mushrooms" (Hutt 1993:194). Here, the translator appears very anxious to have cultural narratives read in his text.[11]

Lall displays some of this same anxiety when he footnotes the following sentence twice:

> He used to go daily to the general's* place for *chakari***.
>
> * Irrespective of whether they were in the army or in the civil service, members of the Rana family that held power in Nepal from 18[46] to 1951 were given military titles. Some of them were declared generals at birth.
>
> ** A system in vogue during the Rana [era] that encouraged courtiers, officials, sycophants, hangers-on and the unemployed to wait upon high-ranking members of the ruling family for the sake of personal favours and employment (Koirala 1997:1).

The translator's problem is clear: if such terms are not explained, the English reader will remain deaf to the cultural narratives being told by the text. Yet there is no end to the terms that require explanation if a *full* translation of cultural narratives is desired. For example, elsewhere Lall footnotes a harangue that a male character subjects his wife to: "A typical example of male chauvinism, which sums up the relationship between men and women among certain communities" (Koirala 1997:3). The translator's intention is obviously to help the English reader read his translation with insight into "background" context of Nepali cultural narratives; yet the footnote mostly seems to point at the futility of any such attempt. Other translators eschew footnotes and weave explanations—not always deftly—into the main text. In *Khairenī Ghāṭ*, Hartsell adds a whole sentence, emphasized below:

> Singabire said, "O brahmin scholar, in this heat the 'buttermilk' from the beer jug would cool you off."
>
> "You are a snake!" the Brahmin said, looking at him. *(Proper Brahmins do not take alcoholic drinks.)*
>
> "Nowadays we have a democracy, don't we? From India itself, equality of castes has swept over us" (Koirala 1984:33).

The resulting awkwardness almost makes a case for silence while translating cultural narratives.

---

11 In his *Nepalese Linguistics* article, Hutt indeed emphasizes the problems posed by cultural narratives, or the need for "cultural contextualization" (Hutt 1991:14).

Yet problems do arise when translators choose not to translate cultural narratives at all. In Poshan Pandey's story "Bhinājuko Swiṭar", the relationship between the character Sabita and her older sister's husband echoes typical narratives about साली भिनाजु (*sālī-bhināju*) dynamics. The Nepali reader's experience is informed by narrative expectations of sexual tension between a man and his wife's younger sisters (Pandey 2039 v.s.). However, in Hutt's translation "A Sweater for Brother-in-Law," the English reader is offered only flat terms like "brother-in-law" and "sister-in-law" (Hutt 1993:266-270). The English reader thus remains unaware of the narrative expectations of the original. The story is not just changed by this omission, the subjectivity of the original character Sabita, which rests on her being a typical *sālī*, is altered. Freed from the cultural narratives that write her, she becomes unmoored from her original identity. Her (mis)translated being drifts in silence.

3. The Desire to Translate

If translation never succeeds, however, neither does it ever entirely fail. There is, in each translator, a persistent desire for such successes, a desire often realized, albeit erratically, unpredictably. This desire leads her to achieve a certain logic or rhetoric during translation, to overcome silence and the constant threat of mistranslation.

Though Derrida disputes the notion that there is an "intact kernel" of meaning in words, he acknowledges that the *desire* for this intact kernel "is desire itself, which is to say that it is irreducible" (Derrida 1985:115). Without this desire to translate correctly, the translators mentioned above would not despair over the failure of meaning in their own translations. They would not use inconsistent strategies within one text, using footnotes in some places while leaving terms unexplained in others. They would not insist upon using italicized Nepali words—as though to retain the original text's true meaning—when English could suffice. They would not add explanations to their text, sacrificing its fluidity. They would not play with language till their text echoes, to their satisfaction, with cultural narratives, and they would not struggle with the fact that each word, translated, displays its own potential for unmeaning. In my own experience it is this playful possibility of failure—and the promise of an elusive success—which spurs the very desire to translate.

In the last section, I established the freedom of the translator in staging her agency, in choosing certain strategies to address the proper noun effect. In this section I will focus more closely on the kinds of desires expressed by individual translators' technical choices, or the *kinds*

of agencies staged by different translators. In order to do so I will examine two translations each of two poems. It is my claim that the four translations examined below display an overwhelming desire on the part of the translators to illustrate, to the English reader, some "true" aspect of the original text. This is to say that the driving interest is to show the "Nepaliness" of the original text to an audience assumed to be interested specifically in Nepal. The translator acts, in the process, as a guide into Nepali writing.

The first set of translations examined is from an excerpt from Laxmi Prasad Devkota's much-translated play *Munā Madan*. The original is also included for reference. Before transcribing these texts so that the reader may compare them, I must note that it is not my interest to pass judgment on the different styles of translation presented below, to deem one effort superior to another. Neither has this been my intention in the examples of "errors" cited earlier. That said, I do hold that the texts selected below reflect something of the range of translation work currently being done on Nepali literature—they give a profile of the translatese being generated around Nepali literature. To select a representative sample of all available translations is not, however, my goal here. The variation in style in the translations that follow speaks to the different desires operating within these texts, and it is to these desires that I direct the reader's attention.

मुना-मदन

लक्ष्मीप्रसाद देवकोटा

मदन भोट जाने वेलामा

नछाडी जानोस् हे मेरो प्राण ! अकेली मलाई,
मनको वनमा ननिभ्ने गरी विरह जलाई,
ननिभ्ने गरी विरह जलाई !
लोचनका तारा ! हे मेरा प्यारा ! यो जोति विलाए,
के भनूँ ? भन्ने म केही थिइन विष नै पिलाए !
प्यारा विष नै पिलाए !
मनको कुरा गलामा अड्छ, अड्कन्छ गलामा,
यो मेरो मुटु पचासवाजी धड्कन्छ पलामा,
यो छाति मेरो चिरेर खोली नजर गराए,
त्यो मन केही फर्कदो होला, तस्वीर खुलाए,
आँसुमा खस्छ मनको टुक्रा, यो आँसु बोल्दैन,
मनको कुरा मनमै बस्छ, छातीले खोल्दैन,
प्यारा ! आँसुले बोल्दैन । (Devkota 1996 v.s.:1)

As Madan Leaves for Tibet

by Laxmi Prasad Devkota
Translated by Michael J Hutt

[Muna]: Do not go, my life, and leave me alone,
Lighting the unquenchable fire of longing in the forest of my heart,
Lighting the unquenchable fire of longing,
Star of my eyes, oh my beloved! If this light disappears,
What can I say? I would say nothing, even if you poisoned me,
Beloved, poisoned me!
The words in my heart stick in my throat, in my throat they stop,
This heart of mine beats fifty times a second,
If this breast of mine could burst open, and you were shown,
Your mind might turn back a little if the picture were revealed,
A piece of my heart falls in my tears, these tears cannot speak,
My deepest feelings remain in my heart, my breast does not reveal them,
My love, these tears cannot speak! (Hutt 1997:129)

Madan is about to go to Tibet

by Laxmi Prasad Devkota
Translated by Ananda P Shrestha

[Muna]: Leave me not alone I pray, do not go my love,
Forests of sorrow forever, set not on fire my love.
Had I been dead my dear, I'd never have said a word,
Was I offered poison love, I wouldn't breathe a word.
My thoughts, my words are stuck, in my throat lie trapped,
A nervous heart that races wild, lies within me wrapped.
If I could only split my breast to show you what's within,
It would change your mind a bit, and your heart would win.
My heart with tears in pieces falls, they say not a word,
All my thoughts within me lie, tears, breast breathe not a word.
(Devkota 1995:20)

The contrast between these two translations is perhaps overly drastic. Hutt aims, at times unsuccessfully, for a literal translation, sacrificing rhythm and rhyme in the process.[12] By contrast, Ananda P. Shrestha often

12 It should be noted that Hutt's translation comes from a book specifically geared at teaching literary Nepali language, as this explains his choice to favor literal translation at the expense of all rhetorical considerations. Hutt's translations in *Himalayan Voices* are not translated in this same style.

sacrifices accuracy by opting to paraphrase. Shrestha's desire to represent the aurally pleasing quality of the original *jhyāure* text[13] is evident from his decision to place his own translation in rhymed couplets—a form traditionally attributed much lyricism. The translator chooses to shorten Devkota's text, even omit lines, so that its wordiness and its repetitions do not mar this chosen couplet form. A "poetic" effect is surely what he attempts. No such attempt is evident in Hutt's translation. Indeed Hutt seems to go out of his way to make his translation "unpoetic," as though to make it clear that his intention is simply to offer the English reader access to the meaning of the text: no pleasure is to be sought in its rhetoric. Indeed, while discussing their individual efforts, Shrestha employs metaphors about the ineffable, while Hutt employs a fairly non-nonsense metaphor which pictures Nepali literature as a geographical area that others can "access" through translation:

> Shrestha:
> I have followed my own light and ventured to hope that the end result is competent, sensitive and authentically poetic; and that in the process I have been true to the spirit of the original and to myself (Devkota 1995:13-14).
>
> Hutt:
> I hope that, for a few, [this book] will serve as a stepping stone to the study of Nepali literature by rendering a small number of texts comparatively accessible through the provision of notes, a glossary and, in the case of poetry, literal English translations (Hutt 1997:x).

Despite these differences, there are, in both translations, traces of a desire to show an English-reading audience some uniquely Nepali aspect of the original text. In this sense, the intention of both translators is primarily illustrative; they both stage their agencies in similar ways. While Shrestha goes to interpretive extremes to illustrate the original's musical rhetoric, Hutt seeks to show exactly the original text's logic, word for word. Neither translator translates *Munā Madan* primarily to play with the process of translation itself, to create a *Munā Madan* that can exist only in translation. The primary goal in both cases is most definitely not the kind of language play called for by Derrida when he makes the following claim:

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13 A *jhyāure* is a Nepali folksong with five, ten or sixteen syllables per line. With the exception of refrains, *Munā Madan* employs sixteen syllables.

> A translation puts us not in the presence but in the presentiment of what "pure language" is, that is, the fact that there is language, that language is language. This is what we learn from translation, rather than the meaning contained in the translated text, rather than this or that particular meaning. We learn that there is language, that language is of language, and that there is a plurality of languages which have that kinship with each other coming from their being languages (Derrida 1985:124).

Rather, the goal is of both translations is to illustrate some "true" aspect of the original—its truly Nepali logic, its truly Nepali rhetoric. Language is then not an end but a tool, a bridge between the Nepal in the text and the uncomprehending outside reader. The translator acts as a guide into literary Nepal.[14]

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14 In his *Nepalese Linguistics* article, Hutt interestingly cites four different translations of the same two lines of *Munā Madan*. The contrasts are meant to reveal different errors made by those with native command of Nepali and good English, and those with native command of English and good Nepali. Because this set of comparisons offers different insight than my own pair, I take the liberty here of reproducing the different versions:

Original text: हातका मैला सुनका थैला के गर्नु धनले ? साग र सिस्नु खाएको वेस आनन्दी मनले ।

MS Devcota's translation: What avails you of gold bags?/Riches got and spent,/The hands are heavy with dust of riches,/happiness is from Heaven sent;/To live on plain food of flour mush and nettle leaves/Is far more better.

Translation from *Seven Poets*: Riches? What does riches avail?/Riches are all so vain!/They are no better than a crust of dirt/That cling unto thy hand!/Is not a dish of nettles made/Far more a delicious thing?

D Rubin's translation: Dirty hands and golden plates/what can you do with wealth?/Better to eat greens and nettles/With a happy heart.

Hutt's translation: Purses of gold are like the dirt on your hands,/What can be done with wealth?/Better to eat spinach and nettles/With happiness in your heart (Hutt 1991:22-24).

In a review of *Himalayan Voices*, Abhi Subedi similarly contrasts Laxmi Prasad Devkota's translation of his own work with Hutt's translation, which read as significantly flatter, and more prose-like. Subedi also contrasts a Devkota translation of a Kedarman Vyathit poem with Hutt's—with similar conclusions. I take the liberty of including the latter examples below:

"Ants" translated by LP Devkota: Emerging like comets from the dark holes in the sky,/Chains of ants are running/Hurry scurry, helter skelter,/In a desert garden./They seem to be singing the anguish of the dewdrop,/On the grassplot of desire.

The next set of comparisons reveals more divergent desires:

परम्परा

वेन्जू शर्मा

कैयौं वर्ष अघिदेखि
मेरो कोठामा
झुण्ड्याइरहेको थोत्रो तस्वीर
कीरा मूसाले खाइसकेको
झम्पाट तस्वीर
वानी परेको आँखाले मात्र
ठम्याउन सक्ने
एउटा थोत्रो आकार
ठिङ्ग उभिइरहेको तस्वीर
मेरी बज्यैले पूजा गर्दै आएको
यो तस्वीर
मेरी आमाले सगौरभ झुण्ड्याएको
यो तस्वीर
आज,
मेरो आँखामा खड्किरहेछ
आस्थाको पनि
एउटा परिधि हुँदोरहेछ
विश्वासको पनि
एउटा सीमा हुँदोरहेछ
अब,
आगोको रंगले
पोतिदिन्छु यो तस्वीरलाई
चारै कोणहरु ढपक्क ढाकिदिएर
एउटा वल्दो सलाई
राखिदिन्छु बीचमा
बस्, बीचमा । (Sharma 2050 v.s.:1)

"Ants" translated by M Hutt: Coming from a dark hole,/A comet in the night sky/singing, anxious for drops of water,/in a straw-filled yard of thirst:/a line of ants, confused, confused,/running through the garden (Subedi 1990:209-211).

This second comparison proves, perhaps, that there can be no simple rule about how much fluency a translator needs in either the original language or the one into which the work is translated. The two articles cited in this note contain important insight for translators of Nepali literature, and deserve to be studied carefully. A *Journal of Nepalese Studies* article written by Maya Watson (1996) contains similar contrasts and also merits study by those interested in literary translation.

Tradition

by Benju Sharma
Translated by Shailendra Kumar Singh

For years
A picture is hanging in my room,
A moth-eaten picture
Defying its original look.
It was proudly hanged on the wall
By my mother,
Which my grandmother has been worshipping ever since.
Today my eyes can't endure it.
Just can't endure it!

There is a limit to everything,
Including the faith.
Time has come
When I must smear this picture
With the colour of fire
And reduce it to ashes
With a burning match-stick (Sharma 1989:35).

Tradition

by Benju Sharma
Translated by Wayne Amtzis and Manju Kanchuli

For years a picture
hung on the wall of my room
Frayed, done in by insects and rats,
recognizable only by those
who had seen it when..
An effaced semblance demanding to be
This picture
worshipped by my grandmother
this picture
hung with pride by my mother
Today, I look at it askance
How long must I turn towards it?
What solace am I to find there?
Now, I want
this picture smeared with red, effaced
Let flame reach the far corners
I place a match
in its midst Done with, done away,
in its midst (Sharma 1998:40).

More than in the earlier set of comparisons, the choices here, and the choice of errors here reveal different desires operating in the translators. Shailendra Kumar Singh's translation is a partial rendering of the contents of the original poem. Choosing to remove the repetitions in the original text, changing the sequence of the lines, omitting some lines, Singh's text seems to fairly declare its intention to simply express the "message" or logic of the poem without getting caught up in its rhetoric. Wayne Amtzis and Manju Kanchuli's translation bears a greater imprint of the original's rhetoric, particularly when it repeats, as in the original, the meditation on the picture's history:

This picture	मेरी बज्यैले पूजा गर्दै आएको
worshipped by my grandmother	यो तस्वीर
this picture	मेरी आमाले सगौरभ झुण्ड्याएको
hung with pride by my mother	यो तस्वीर

The repetition makes the tone of the translation echo the brooding intensity of the original. Though the Amtzis-Kanchuli translation also errs in its own ways, it is, I would argue, less illustrative in intent than the Singh translation, or than the two *Munā Madan* translations examined earlier. Craft makes all the difference here. The fluency, dexterity and language play in Amtzis and Kanchuli's rhetoric prevents their translation from being read primarily in order to gain insight into the original work or into Nepali culture or even—because the original poet is a woman—into Nepali womanhood. This poem pays greater attention than Shrestha, Hutt and Singh's translations to the reader's experience of language. By playing with sound, rhythm, repetition—by focusing on craft—it offers language as an end in itself. The reader is not asked to forego rhetorical pleasure in order to understand the poem. Neither is the reader asked to sacrifice an understanding of the logic to experience poetic rhetoric. The desire that operates in this translation is the desire for the pleasure that languages, and their kinship, can offer. Unlike in the previous translations cited here, the translators do not act as guides to authentic Nepal/Nepaliness, but rather as co-travelers to the liminal lands of Nepal in translation. They stage their agency foremost as poets investigating Nepal-in-translation.

4. With Love and Aesthetics

In informal discussions, Nepali writers express a variety of reasons why Nepali literature must be translated better, and with greater frequency. To begin with, there is a desire that Nepali literature gain due recognition

within global literature: for the richness experienced by those living within Nepali languages remains almost wholly unfelt by those outside. There is also a desire that foreigners interested in Nepal—expatriates, literary-minded tourists—should be able to read its literature, and thus gain insight into or appreciation for the culture. Most existing works of translation are considered inadequate to these tasks. Other writers decry the "biased" canonization of Nepali literature in translation, pointing out the under-representation of works within the progressive tradition: future translation efforts must redress this bias. Yet others speak of having nothing to show of their work in interactions with writers who do not speak Nepali languages. There is no way for Nepali writers to establish literary dialogue with the outside world in the absence of translated texts.

Such discussions are often marked by an us-and-them dialectic, corresponding, I believe, to the illustrative impulse evidenced in Nepali literature in English translation. "They" on the outside can be guided to understand "our" literature only through translation. Such dialectics obviously obscure the many back-and-forth migrations taking place in Nepal which create "outsiders" well versed in Nepali and "insiders" whose first language is English. Indeed, in the experience of Nepalis who speak English and foreigners who speak Nepali languages (or more broadly in the experience of anyone bilingual), the us-and-them divide between two languages must give way to Derridean me-and-myself subtleties, there being no neat opposites of one and other within individual subjectivity. This lack of polarity within each individual leads Derrida to state: "One never writes either in one's own language or in a foreign language" (Derrida 1985:128).

Each translator has experienced this truth: of writing neither in one's own language nor in a foreign one. The translator should neither subscribe to an us-and-them dialectic nor approach the task of translation with primarily illustrative intent (the latter act resulting from the former formulation). No work is free from its function as representation, of course. But it is my view that an ethical translation of Nepali literature cannot position the original text *primarily* as an inscrutable utterance that the translator will—most gallantly—help the non-Nepali reader understand. Rather, an ethical translation must centrally concern itself with creating Nepali subjectivity, landscapes and narratives in translation, offering an experience of language resonant enough, well crafted enough to pay homage to the original's rhetoric while remaining accurate enough to pay homage to its logic. Language play must be the primary concern: but this play must be conducted with humility.

"Translation is the most intimate act of reading," Spivak argues. "I surrender to the text when I translate" (1993:180).[15] Such surrender comes only from love for the original work, a love which demands that the translator surrender her own agency to the rhetoric of the original:

> The task of the translator is to facilitate [the] love between the original and its shadow, a love that permits fraying, holds the agency of the translator and the demands of her imagined or actual audience at bay. The politics of translation...too often suppresses this possibility because the translator cannot engage with, or cares insufficiently for, the rhetoricity of the original (Spivak 1993:181).

Spivak goes on to argue for a translator's intimacy with the original language, and she even suggests that it would be "a practical help if one's relationship with the language being translated was such that sometimes one preferred to speak in it about intimate things" (Spivak 1993:183). Love for the original text, and intimacy with the original language are thus the first of her requirements for an ethical translation. Although she holds that the "genuinely bilingual" translator has the advantage here (Spivak 1993:187), I would suggest that the bilingual poetic/writerly rhetorical sensibility might occur more easily in collaborative efforts such as the Amtzis-Kanchuli example above. Certainly, given the poor English taught in Nepal, and given the remoteness of Nepali languages to English-language poets and writers, the convergence of these skills is perhaps rare in any one individual in today's Nepali literary community.

Spivak's second requirement for an ethical translation is that the translator be knowledgeable about the literature of the language translated from, or be "sufficiently in touch with what is going on in literary production in that language". The translator must be "capable of distinguishing between good and bad writings..., resistant and conformist writings" (Spivak 1993:188). The parallel drawn here between good and bad/resistant and conformist reveals, of course, Spivak's own position: resistant writing constitutes good writing. Given a choice of translating from a wide field of Bengali literature, she opts for the work of Mahasweta Devi over the writings of more conventional women writers and of equally or more resistant men writers:

> I remain interested in writers who are against the current, against the mainstream. I remain convinced that the interesting literary text might

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15 Spivak's article addresses specifically third world postcolonial feminist translation. I have abstracted from this context, without, I believe, misappropriating her basic intention to address the ethics of translation.

> be precisely the text where you do not learn what the majority view of majority cultural representation or self-representation of a nation state might be (Spivak 1993:189).

My view is that words like "good" must be allowed their due polysemia: literature that occupies a "good" space in one local context may not do so in another local context. (Think, for instance, of the goodness of progressive Tij songs circulating in Nepal's minority non-Hindu communities). Scales of goodness shift perhaps with context.[16] Yet even if one does not subscribe to Spivak's view of good writings, she is surely making an important point: the translator must select her original text based on knowledge of the larger literary discourse that it arises from and contributes to. The translator's love for the original text is not meaningful in a lack of critical awareness of its background and context.

Spivak's writing on the ethics of translation largely define my own standard to aim for. Yet in the course of "The Politics of Translation," she makes a statement that I find myself hesitate at, though my hesitation arises from her greater emphasis on the theory rather than the craft of translation: "The understanding of the task of the translator and the practice of the craft are *related but different*" (Spivak 1993:198; emphasis mine).

I would argue, based on the examples above, that understanding the task of the translator (or the expression of this understanding) and the craft of translation may be different, but they are effectively inseparable. Even if a translator's love for an original comes from her intimacy with the language, even if a translator selects an original work based upon an understanding of the context of the work, this love can find no expression in the absence of her skill as a translator. There can be no expression of love if the translator's language lacks craft. There can be no ethics in the absence of aesthetics.

This is a simple point, but I make it with some hesitation because this is exactly the point at which many translations of Nepali literature seem to stammer and stutter. Hutt seems to best summarize the quality of the translatese surrounding Nepali literature when he writes:

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16 Spivak too acknowledges: "Good and bad is a flexible standard, like all standards." She takes as an example the fact that a work that seems resistant in English might in fact function in a reactionary way in the original language (Spivak 1993:188).

> A limited number of translations from Nepali literature have been produced by both [Nepalis] and foreigners to date. Those produced by Nepalis have, of course, demonstrated for the most part a thorough understanding of the original text, and are therefore valuable, but their quality and readability as literature has been marred by the translators' less than perfect command of English, their preconceptions about the kind of literary style which is appropriate and the total absence of cultural contextualization. They tend therefore to be read only by scholars of the literature, and have generally failed to reach wider literary audience outside Nepal.
>
> Some of the translations produced by foreigners have been elegant and context-sensitive, but spectacularly inaccurate in places...(Hutt 1991:21).

To add to this, I believe I am not being unfair when I claim that—whether the translators are Nepali or foreign—few current translations of Nepali literature seem committed to the aesthetic skill and sophistication that the original works deserve. Instead, many translations can seem quite cavalier in their use of language, forcing the original's logic and rhetoric to submit to the translator's whims or limitations.

Section two of this paper established the freedom of the translator in staging her agency, while this section makes a case for the translator to act responsibly within her chosen field of errors. There are of course no fixed good and bad techniques of translation: but there are surely levels of sophistication in a translator's language play. Again, the aesthetic prowess of a translation generates its ethicality. Insofar as a translation which is unmindful of its own aesthetics displays a lack of respect for the original text, it must be considered to have lapsed in its ethics.

This said, one can not doubt the love for the original text that motivates many of the current translations of Nepali literature. Given that there is little money to be made in translating Nepali literature, and hardly any prestige to compensate, it takes a tremendous amount of goodwill, a tremendous affection for the original text, for translators to pour their efforts into the task. To claim that such efforts are not simply inadequate but actually *unethical* because they are lacking in craft is uncharitable indeed.

Spivak addresses precisely this miserliness in the context of translating third world feminist literature when she writes:

> Five years ago, berated as unsisterly, I would think, "Well, you know one ought to be a bit more giving etc.," but then I asked myself again, "What am I giving, or giving up? To whom am I giving by assuring

> that you don't have to work that hard, just come and get it? What am I trying to promote?" ...But surely by demanding higher standards of translation, I am not marginalizing myself or the language of the original? (Spivak 1993:187).

As such, many current translations of Nepali literature may best serve as—very valuable—guide-marks to work that at some later date, with sufficient attention to craft, might be translated with love and aesthetics. Indeed, I believe that much of the translation work done so far forms very solid ground for future ethical translation of Nepali literature. The fact that many translations are out of print or extremely difficult to locate hamper their being used in this way, of course. Even the Tribhuvan University's central library contains only a smattering of Nepali literature in translation.

Lest I sound too lofty with this talk of ethics, I end this section with an acknowledgment of the very real difficulties facing the translator of Nepali literature, myself included. To begin with, translators face very basic logistical problems finding original literary texts, which are—also—often out of print and unavailable in libraries. My own experience is that it is difficult to gain an overview of Nepali literature before beginning work as a translator. This makes it difficult to choose texts to translate—and easy to begin translating accessible work only to find, later on, that more worthy literature has been written farther afield. Critical works on literature are equally hard to come by. It is easy to begin translating a work and to find upon intimate reading, some disagreeable aspect—chauvinism, for example, or stereotyping, or subtler problems pertaining to style—embedded deeply within it.

In addition, the "you don't have to work hard" approach that Spivak mentions above seems, at times, very pronounced here. (My own efforts at translation began at the request to just "dash off" a few translations). Perhaps most translators of Nepali literature do begin in one or another accidental manner, and muddle their way through some works till they arrive at an understanding of their task, and of their own desire in staging their agency. Of course, translations published during this "learning" phase merit critical assessment. However, hostile attacks of the kind that one translator launches when snidely referring to another as "some mediocre hacks from the London School of Oriental Studies" (Devkota 1984:Introduction) can only discourage dialogue. Fawning praise leads to similar results. Somewhere in between the extremes of "everything you do is wrong" and "anything you do is appreciated" lies the possibility of peer review: this possibility is perhaps not realized as often as it should

be. Certainly, peer review rarely takes place with translation works in progress.

This is not all. The prevalence of self-publishing in Kathmandu, and the lack of editing facilities at publishing houses can easily promote sub-standard work. Though publishers like Ratna Pustak Bhandar have been publishing Nepali literature in translation, the content and quality of these books have largely depended upon the translator herself. In my view, a certain rush to individual glory can also operate in Kathmandu, discouraging practices such as asking for (duly credited) help, or undertaking collaborations when individual skill might not suffice. Other factors that encourage ethical lapses in translation are related to the very structure of Kathmandu's society. For example, for reasons of personal connection, the translator of Nepali literature can hardly avoid translating certain works as a gesture of goodwill to the author, putting aside more deserving works in the process. By extension, it may also be unavoidable at times to translate work that one actually finds "bad." One can hardly say no: such are the dynamics of our small inter-linked excessively courteous society.

Other translators have surely faced additional challenges. I do not suggest, therefore, that it is a simple matter for the translator of Nepali literature to stage her agency in ways that meet perfect ethical standards. Ethicality is as elusive a goal here as anywhere.

5. The Politics of Literary Translation

In much of this paper I have kept distance from the dialectics of oppositional politics which might pit one powerful language against a weaker one. Instead I have focused on ethical issues embedded in language itself, opting for Derridean dialectics of one-and-oneself. These dialectics—along with such terms as "migration," "erring," and "play"—suggest a certain painlessness in the interaction between languages. Yet it is undeniable that in Nepal, there are very real power imbalances between the English and Nepali languages, and between the Nepali language and other national tongues. Migration between languages does not occur here without pain. In concluding this paper I want to return to the points raised in the first section of this paper: despite the fact that there are few Nepalis for whom English is a mother tongue, the language occupies a startlingly privileged position as compared to the country's other languages. This fact, and the context of contemporary language politics, both raise ethical concerns for the English translator of Nepali literature.

First, let me place the ethical problems raised in this paper in some perspective: there is obviously a difference in the scale of ethics in acting as an agent of English in Nepal, and as an agent of—for example—the Enron corporation from the English-speaking world. With average print runs ranging from five hundred to a thousand, English translations of Nepali literature clearly have a very limited readership. Relatively small transgressions are committed by them, relatively minor ethical lapses are made. Yet it is important to remember that a readership of five hundred often equals the size of the original-language readership of the original work. Furthermore, English translations speak to a select group of national and foreign elite—in the government, non-government, national private and multinational sectors—who are well placed to determine the course of the nation. Also, in theory (though perhaps rarely in reality), they let Nepal speak to the larger world outside. To translate is to bridge the gap between Nepali literature and a select readership, to bridge the gap between the two differently-privileged (sometimes mutually exclusive) worlds of the linguistically and economically enfranchised.

No matter how much love and aesthetics the English translator of Nepali literature applies to her work—no matter how ethically she chooses to stage her agency—there is no getting around the fact that she promotes a language which tries to operate hegemonically in Nepali national discourse. What is the English translator to do about the fact that she is not just a product, but an agent of English in Nepal, helping to spread a language which easily marginalizes national languages?

Helping spread English in Nepal: naturally this sounds, to our post-Panchayat nationalist ears, like a terrible betrayal. In many instances English does overshadow other national languages. One must not forget, however, that present-day migrations between English and Nepali languages take place alongside important subversions of the English language's hegemonic functioning. The post-colonial critic Braj B. Kachru has pointed out that the indigenization of colonial English has led to distinct English "ecologies" in different parts of the world (Kachru 1995: 291). Kachru's metaphors from plant life imply a certain lack of will that I have tried to avoid in this paper, but nevertheless his point is clear: the English spoken in Nigeria differs from the English spoken in, say, Sri Lanka, or in the Philippines and forms, as such, its own loose ecology. Each grafting, each hybrid outcropping helps undermine the hegemonic functioning of the unified English language. Indeed, it is no longer controversial for Bhabha to claim: "English is no longer an English language" (Bhabha 1990a:6).

Nepal is still a ways off from indigenizing English in ways that counter the language's hegemonic potential. The presence of English in the nation has been too narrowly concentrated to allow for this. Only now, with the nascent spread of English beyond a few power centers in Kathmandu, can we even begin to consider such possibilities in earnest.

Cited below is a note by the critic Tara Nath Sharma on one of his own translation efforts, which addresses this growing possibility:

> ...The translator with his sincere feeling that English is the language belonging to all of us, humans, and as it has as many varieties as there are different communities using it he has taken some liberty here and there of employing the Nepalese kind which is gradually emerging and taking its shape (Sharma 1999:11).

The "Nepalese kind of English" that Sharma identifies is exactly the type of indigenized language which might subvert the power of English in Nepal. At this stage however, non-literary efforts throughout the country are doing more than literary translations to promote this kind of English. Day-to-day writings appearing in vernacular dailies and weeklies, and in magazines and locally published books are slowly beginning to indigenize English, infusing it with a Nepali flair for language. Tourism industry literature provides another example of how Nepalis accept English on their own terms. Signboards provide yet other, more vivid, examples. In theory, of course, the literary translator should be able to craft a subversive English with more technical prowess than the street-side circulator of "Nenglish"—but at this point any such possibility remains more of an idea than a reality.

Finally, it seems to me that language politics in Nepal gives rise to another important consideration for the English translator of Nepali literature. Given the complex multilingual and polyphonic discourse being carried out in the country, how is one to choose works worthy of translation into English?

Translating Nepali literature into English, one helps build an English-language canon of Nepali literature: the more times Laxmi Prasad Devkota's *Muna Madan* gets translated into English, the more deeply this work becomes entrenched in this canon. This English-language canon is actively being built, at this point, by each new publication. An analysis of the contents of this "canon" deserves close study to see which Nepal is most represented in English. From the bibliography of translated works included in this issue (Des Chene and Gautam, this issue), it is clear that there is a heavy favoring of the literature of Bahun and Newar men writing

Nepali-language and Nepal-*bhasa* literature. One may reasonably argue that such a canonization reflects reality: in all likelihood, Bahun and Newar men comprise the most highly educated groups in the nation. They are the most prolific contributors to Nepali-language and Nepal-bhasa literature. And yet the English translator must consider the fact of gender and caste/ethnicity privilege to judge the responsibility of selecting works to translate, to feel out her own desire in acting as a translator, and to stage her agency in ethical terms. Whose Nepal does she seek to represent to her elite readership? Which Nepal most deserves to speak the language of the powerful both within and outside Nepal?

My own view is perhaps easily inferred from the very questions I ask: today's English translator might best contribute to Nepali literature by turning her attention to literary works which serve (and are preferably but not necessarily authored by) the economically disadvantaged and the culturally disadvantaged such as women and neglected caste/ethnic groups. Equally worthy would be attention given to contemporary national language movements that foreground Nepal's multilingual character. In fact, for those who revel in the inherent impurity of languages, and who seek to investigate the kinship between similar and dissimilar Nepali tongues, the work of translation necessitated by contemporary language movements provides tremendous opportunity for creative play and innovation. Organizations which aim to promote minority languages and similar individual efforts such as those of the poet Bairagi Kainla also merit the attention of English translators of Nepali literature. Surely these are the diverse, de-centered Nepals which might speak most poignantly to the English world.

I myself find these political considerations to be slightly daunting when I think of how I might stage my agency while translating. Nevertheless I also feel that the translator of Nepali literature must take into account such political considerations. For, viewed in the most critical light, the work of the English translator is not even as admirable as generally assumed. Surely it is an anomaly that English translation claims more importance—and more public and private funds—than translation between national languages. (How often does one hear of a text being translated from Bhojpuri, say, to Sherpa? And yet surely this is vital to the development of Nepali national discourse.) It is all too easy for elite class-based English to obscure the needs of the less powerful languages of Nepal.

In conclusion, then, the English translator of Nepali literature faces many tasks ahead in seeking to work in an ethical fashion. All of the

translation work done till now forms good, solid ground upon which further ethical literary translation work may be based—but with an intimate sense of the original language, with proper inquiry into the discourse surrounding the translated text, and with a commitment to craft. In my opinion, the translator of Nepali literature into English may be best advised to apply humility to her work.

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THE KOHLA PROJECT: STUDYING THE PAST WITH THE TAMU-MAI

Judith Pettigrew and Yarjung Tamu

Introduction

Judith

> I interview Hom Bahadur: "How does it feel to be in Kohla?" "Great, it's our old village, the place of our ancestors". He follows this with, "I think that we should get people up here with shovels to dig the place up and put the proof in the *kohībo.*[1] I comment, "if anyone is going to dig it up there should be archæologists involved as they will know how to dig without damaging the old buildings". Hom Bahadur nods his head and comments, "Yes, that would be a very good idea".
>
> (Fieldnotes August 1992)

The Kohla Project for Archæology and Ethno-History which developed as a collaborative venture between University of Cambridge researchers and members of the *Tamu Pye Lhu Sangh*, a Tamu (Gurung) religious and cultural organisation, has its origins in this discussion which took place at the ancestral village Kohla in August 1992.

The Kohla Project is concerned with archæology and ethno-history as a 'community process'. Its multi-dimensional approach incorporates archæological survey/excavation alongside the collection of oral histories and interviews with Tamu people concerning their views of the past. A 'project within a project', it is also concerned with how history is created in the present and the role that our work plays in this venture. A central feature of the Kohla Project is its commitment to the concept of multiple voices–separate but equal. This article, written by two of the Project's co-directors, social anthropologist Judith Pettigrew, and shaman/cultural expert Yarjung Tamu, attempts to address the issue of multivocality by exploring the social, religious and historical background to the Kohla Project from two different perspectives. The article begins with an

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1 The *kohībo* is *Tamu Pye Lhu Sangh's* headquarters in Pokhara. A striking building, whose architectural design is based on shamanic symbology, it serves as a cultural centre, shamanic 'monastery', office and meeting place. It also contains a museum.

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introduction to the socio-political context within which the Project has evolved.

The *Jana Āndolan* (People's Movement) of 1990 created new possibilities for organisation and discourse among the people who call themselves *janajāti* (ethnic minorities or minority nationalities), and *ādivāsī* (indigenous peoples). Much of this new discourse relates to their position within the nation-state, their desire to negotiate a new relationship to the state and to enjoy new rights within it. The demands of the present are based on the realities of today and the experiences of the past, experiences which are being carefully examined from the perspective of the long-term effects that they have had on the *janajāti*.

Among the Tamu-mai[2] this process of re-examination is taking place on many levels and in talking to a wider national forum the Tamu-mai are also talking to themselves. The prime topics of discussion include the question of historical origin, the religion(s) of the Tamu-mai, the preservation of language, loss of culture and the effects of Hinduisation. Of particular concern are the 17th and 19th century Hindu-authored genealogies (*vaṁśāvalī*), which posited a mixed Indo-Aryan and Mongolian origin for the Tamu-mai and portrayed one group of clan lineages, the *Sōgi*, (Nep. *Cārjāt*) as being 'superior' to another, the *Kugi* (Nep. *Sorajāt*).

In the post-*Āndolan* years these discourses have led to the foundation of a plethora of new ethnic organisations. One such organisation is the *Tamu Pye Lhu Sangh* (Tamu Religious and Cultural Organisation)[3] which was founded in Pokhara in 1990. *Tamu Pye Lhu Sangh's* (TPLS) self-appointed mandate is to preserve and revitalise Tamu cultural traditions[4] and in particular the shamanic traditions of the *pachyu* and

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2 'Tamu-mai' is the plural of Tamu.

3 This is not a literal translation. The *Pye-tā Lhu-tā* is the shamanic religion of the *pachyu*, *klehbri* and *'bonist' lāmā* (see below). The term 'Pye' refers to the 'oral texts' and according to my informants the term 'Lhu' refers to the manner in which things are created. For a slightly different interpretation see Pignède (1993 [1966]:342) and Strickland (1982:252-287).

4 Revivalism is leading to the emergence of innovative and syncretic cultural forms which have their origins in the past but their expression in the present. Change is thus taking place in the guise of continuity, and in the process is facilitating the emergence of new Tamu identities. For further discussion of this topic see Pettigrew (1995).

klehbri and the *'bonist' lāmā*.[5]. It is concerned with shamanic interpretations of the past, the effects of Hinduisation and status relationships between the clans. While a significant number of other Tamu organisations exist including the national Tamu organisation *Tamu Chōj Dhī*, the Kaski district organisation *Tamu Dhī* and the Buddhist organisations *Bauddha Arghaun Sadan* and *Tamu Bauddha Sewa Samiti*, TPLS is the only organisation which is directly concerned with the shamanic traditions and its position as such is uncontested. Its stance on the relationships between the clans, however, while widely supported at an overt level, is contested, often covertly, by those Tamu-mai who perceive a hierarchical relationship to exist.

In the absence of documented sources the present re-examination of Tamu history is proceeding along different lines of enquiry (see Des Chene 1996:117). These include the search for evidence of Tamu kingdoms, the re-evaluation of the place of the Tamu-mai in the Hindu kingdoms, the study of language and the study of religious history. The last of these is the approach taken by members of the TPLS.

Tamu shamans are considered by many Tamu-mai to be experts in indigenous knowledge and understanding of the past. What they know about Tamu history is based on knowledge contained within the 'oral texts' (*pye*) including texts such as the *Tōhdā* which narrate the downward migration of the Tamu-mai, a section of which is retraced in reverse during the shamans' ritual journey in the *pai laba* death ritual. As the shamanic version of history relates to a literal landscape, the search for a more authentic version of the past has led TPLS members to travel into this landscape where they attempt to match text to geography. During the

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5 Although the belief system, cosmology and linguistic traditions of the *pachyu* and *klehbri* are essentially shared, they perform slightly different functions. The *klehbri* is primarily, but not exclusively, a death specialist and in some villages is intimately involved with the performance of certain calendrical rituals to village and clan deities. The *pachyu* is an exorcist, healer and death specialist. Both, but predominantly the *pachyu*, perform 'rituals of affliction' day-to-day rituals (*tēhmai*) which are involved with the removal or prevention of human 'misery' (Turner 1967: 9-16). Certain ritual activities overlap and some rites can be performed by either practitioner. *'Bonist' lāmā* is the term applied (by TPLS activists) to *lāmās* who conduct death rituals in collaboration with the shamans and like them include animal sacrifice as an integral element of their practice. Villagers usually refer to them as *purāno lāmās* ('old' *lāmās*) as opposed to the *nayā lāmās* ('new' *lāmās)* (cf. n. 7).

1992 research trip (see below), in which I participated, we 'discovered'[6] that there are significant ruins at the historic village of Kohla. This led to a request for archæological assistance and the subsequent development of the Kohla Project.

Biographical Introduction

Yarjung

I am a practising shaman and an ex-Gurkha soldier. I am a member of a shamanic family from the village of Yangjakot although I now live in Pokhara and also spend time in England. My brothers and I have a large *hyoīdo* ('parish') which includes many villages. We also perform rituals for people from our *hyoīdo* who have settled in Pokhara. All my male ancestors have been *pachyus* and many of the women in our family know a lot about the tradition although they do not work as shamans[7]. I started training to be a *pachyu* when I was under five and passed my final exam when I was in my twenties. After that I joined the British Army. Our family does not have a tradition of joining the British Army and I am one of the first members to have become a Gurkha. I served in the Gurkhas for 13 years and during that time I had an opportunity to travel all over the world. I especially enjoyed meeting local people in the countries we visited and learning a bit of their language. I felt that some of the people I met, like the Maoris and the Maya, are similar to us. I was particularly interested in their religions and healing traditions but as I was with the army I didn't have time to do much research.

Because of my experience and interest in healing I volunteered for medical training and became a regimental medical assistant. I worked in the British Military Hospital (BMH) in Hong Kong. Some of the British doctors knew that I was a shaman–they called me a witch-doctor–and asked me to see patients that they felt I could help and they couldn't. So even though I was in the army I continued doing shamanic curing.

Travelling and living in different countries made me realise the richness of my own cultural traditions. When I retired from the army I

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6 The shepherds and cow-herders who spend time in this area with their animals were fully aware of the existence of the village ruins prior to our visit. They, however, ascribed a different value to the ruins as they saw them as a source of stonework which they could use in the building of their temporary shelters, rather than as part of their heritage to be researched and preserved.

7 The *pye* tells us that in the past women were shamans and in fact at one stage the tradition was saved by a woman.

decided to return to work as a *pachyu* and spend my time researching my own culture and trying to save it from becoming lost. We are facing a lot of problems at present as many of the young Tamu people don't want to train to be shamans. We are losing our cultural knowledge and language, especially in the towns. Some Tamus have converted to Buddhism and nowadays *lāmās* are performing the three-day *pai laba* death ritual. The *pai laba* is a shamanic ritual–how can a *lāmā* perform it? It doesn't make any sense and it couldn't possibly work. The question of 'higher' and 'lower' clans is a huge problem in our society. The *pye* tells us that there is no 'inferior' and 'superior' in Tamu society. People need to know what the *pye* says.

The Kohla Project is important because it gives us a chance to find out the truth about the history of the Tamu-mai. My role in the Project is to explain what the *pye* tells us about the Tamu past and to provide an interpretation of the landscape and material culture based on shamanic knowledge. Obviously many of the things I know are secret and I don't give this information away. I make careful decisions about what information I make public, but too many shamans have taken their knowledge to their grave and then it is completely lost. To save our traditions and to help people learn more about our true history it is important nowadays to share our knowledge.

Judith

I am Irish and a social anthropologist. I commenced my work among the Tamu-mai in 1990 when, as a Ph.D student at the University of Cambridge, I began studying illness and healing in the village of Yangjakot. Shortly afterwards I was introduced to Yarjung and started collaborating with him in early 1991. Our collaborative work covers a range of different projects including translation and analysis of the *pye*, the study of sacred landscape, ritual healing and video documentation. We have also worked together on a series of museum projects in the UK, Switzerland and Nepal. My Ph.D dissertation which was completed in 1995, a year after the Kohla Project began, was a study of the politics of cultural preservation, shamanic practice and ethnography. I am currently a lecturer at the University of Central Lancashire where I teach medical anthropology.

As the anthropologist on the Kohla Project I am responsible for the ethno-historical dimension of the research. To date this aspect of the Project has focused primarily on the translation and analysis of the historical content of the *pye* and analysis of the social dynamics of the

Project itself. During field trips undertaken in 1994 and 1995 ethno-history interviews informed archæological enquiry. All phases and activities of the research trips were video-taped and interviews were conducted with local people on a range of topics including shepherding patterns, house-building techniques, local flora and fauna, sacred geography and interpretations of material culture. Interviewees included shepherds from different Tamu villages, our guide Damarsing, people from the villages of Yangjakot and Wachok, visiting shamans from Pokhara and our porters.

In the course of this work it has became apparent that extensive ethno-historical research needs to be conducted in addition to that done in conjunction with archæological enquiry. I am currently in the process of forming an ethno-history team that will consist of myself and several local people who will be recruited from different gender, age and locational backgrounds. In-depth ethno-historical research will begin in Tamu villages and in Pokhara in April 2000. Interviews are to be conducted with a wide range of individuals, male and female, across different social strata, age groups, clans and backgrounds.

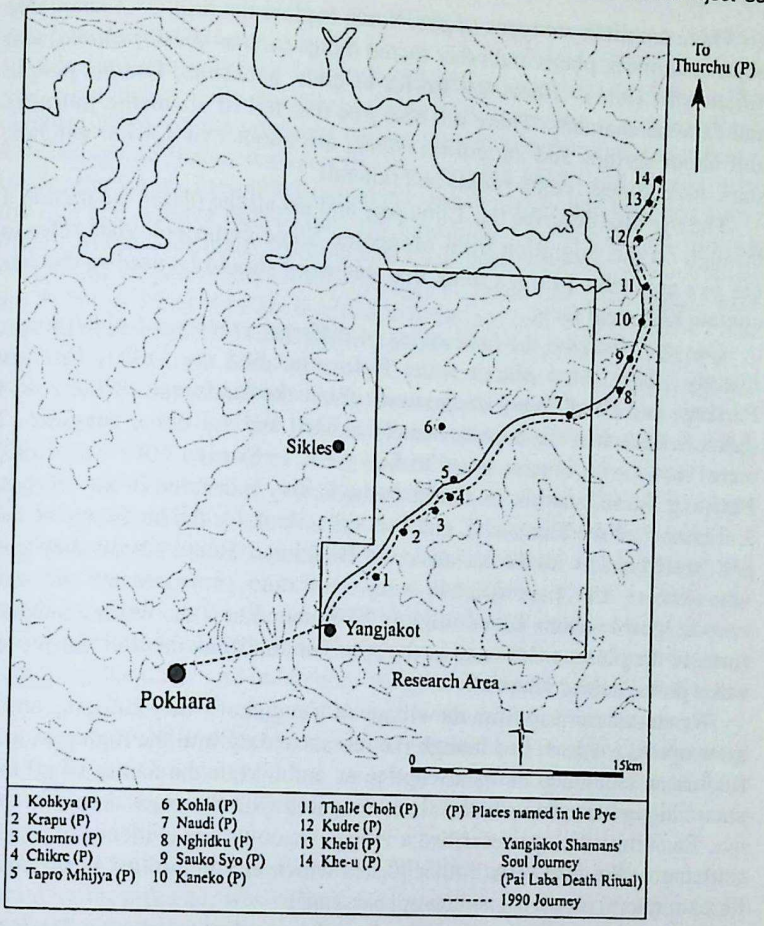
Yarjung, who is the initiator of the research-orientated journeys, begins the next section by describing the first research journey which he undertook in 1990 and out of which the subsequent journeys evolved.

First Research Journey: Looking for the Landscape of the Pye

Yarjung

Before I describe my first research journey I need to explain about the *pye*. The *pye* are the sacred oral texts of the Tamu *pachyu* and *klehbri* shamans. They also explain the history of the Tamu-mai. At the beginning of a ritual before we start the *pye* we chant and describe what we are going to do in the ritual. After that we start the *pye*. Some *pye* are effective by themselves, you just need to chant them to bring about change. *Pye* vary in length, some take 30 minutes to chant and others like the *serga* in the three-day death ritual take about ten hours to complete. Some *pye* describe actions or events, others call evil spirits or gods and ancestors. During a major ritual when a *pachyu* needs the extra protection of the *pachyu* god *Pakreĩ Klhyesõdi Prehsõdi* in his body, he chants a "calling" *pye* so that he can enter trance. At the end of a ritual we chant the success of the ritual and the protection of the participants.

Altogether there are perhaps three or four hundred different *pye* so this is a very rich oral tradition, perhaps one of the richest in the Himalayan



Map 1

region. Shamans from different villages know different *pye* or slightly different versions of the same *pye*. I know over a hundred. The *pye* are chanted in a ritual language named *Chõ Kyui. Chõ* is the Tamu place of origin. Although we now speak *Tamu Kyui*, *Chõ Kyui* is our original language. It is a bit like a secret language, as nowadays few people understand or speak it. Many shamans don't know it and they just chant the texts by rote.

There are different types of *pye*. Some explain the origins of shamanic objects, animals, plants and other sacred things such as yeast (*prhama*) and millet wine (*pah*). Others tell stories of gods, ancestors, famous people and famous shamans. There are also *pye* that tell of shamanic journeys and about shrines and ancestors. Others are about evil spirits, witches, stars, luck, illness, death rituals and funerals.

The *pye* also describe the Tamu past and list all the places we travelled through on our migration from Mongolia. Some anthropologists refer to our *pye* as myths. I do not think that this word should be used as the *pye* contain historical facts.

Our *pye* describe the landscapes of different areas but I didn't know exactly where these places were. Before he died my father, *Pachyu* Parsing, and I had many discussions about the landscape of the *pye*. I didn't believe that these places really existed and my father suggested I travel into the mountains to try to find them. In Srawan 2047 v.s. (1990) Balasing Tamu, another ex-Gurkha who is very interested in the religion and history of the Tamu-mai, and I set off to look for the landscape of the *pye* (see Map 1) with the assistance of Budhiman Tamu, a head shepherd who knows the pasturelands very well and is interested in and knowledgeable about Tamu religion. Budhiman knew the whereabouts of some of the places mentioned in the *pye*. The fourth member of our group was a porter named Khora.

We started our trip from the village of Yangjakot where Balasing and I grew up. As we travelled though the forests and up into the high pastures Budhiman explained the landscape to us and told us the names of all the places along our route which I then compared with the place names in the *pye*. Each time the *pye* described a village we could see evidence of a past settlement. We also found other places which are mentioned in the *pye*, for example, rivers (*syõ*) and rest-places (*nhẽ*).

We walked for approximately nine days and got as far as Thurchu which is below Homa Nghairu Nghyõ (the pilgrimage lake known as Dudh Pokhari in Nepali. See Map 1). Thurchu is at about 15,000 feet and is an important base for Tamu shepherds. It is also the place where the shamans' ritual journeys meet up and therefore all dead souls (*plah*) from the different Tamu villages pass through Thurchu on their final journey to Targila ("heaven"). Above Thurchu is Pakraĩ an important secret holy mountain for Tamu shamans. One morning Balasing and I suddenly began to go into trance and Budhiman explained that we had reached Pakraĩ. We wanted to cross Ekrai Mountain into Manang, but Budhiman said that we

didn't have enough equipment for climbing through the snow. At this point we decided to turn back.

Up until that point we found that all the places that we chant in the *pye* were there in the landscape in exactly the same sequence. Each evening after we set up camp we sat around the fire and spent hours discussing the match between the *pye* and the landscape. It was very interesting for us, for while Budhiman knew the landscape he didn't know the *pye* and while I didn't know the landscape I knew the *pye*. Putting them together was really exciting and I was very surprised. I had studied the *pye* for 25 years, since I was a young child, and had often argued with my father as I had strongly doubted that these places existed. Now I had seen them for myself, I realised the strength of our tradition and felt that it was important to do further research. However, our 15 day journey had been self-funded and sadly we had no more money to do further research.

On return to Pokhara following our journey we started having meetings and discussions with other Tamu people who were also interested in Tamu history, religion and culture. In Kartik 2047 v.s. (1990) we founded an official organisation to study Tamu cultural traditions and our indigenous shamanic religion, the *Pye-tā Lhu-tā*. Almost all of the founding members are ex-Gurkha soldiers and officers. Our organisation is called *Tamu Pye Lhu Sangh* (TPLS). All Tamu-mai are welcome to become involved in TPLS and help us study and preserve our cultural traditions, language and indigenous religion which are in danger of being lost. The study of the history that is with the shamans is also very important as it tells us that there are no 'higher' and 'lower' clans among the Tamu-mai. Nowadays, many people and especially the young people, no longer accept these ideas that have caused such problems in our society.

Some months after we founded TPLS we met Judith Pettigrew, a social anthropologist, who at that time was doing research for her Ph.D on Tamu cultural traditions.

Chhyajyalo [greetings]

Journey Number Two: The Journey to the Land of the Ancestors

Judith

In August 1992 I accompanied members of TPLS on their first expedition northward through the districts of Kaski, Lamjung, Manang and Mustang (see Map 2). The purpose of the trip was to discover if the places listed in the *pye* exist in landscape. The first part of the journey retraced the overlapping downward migration route of the Tamu-mai and

the upward ritual journey route along which the shamans guide the souls of the dead in the *pai laba* death ritual. While the ideal would have been to travel the entire length of both routes, in practice it was only possible to trace those sections of the journeys that lie within the districts of Kaski, Lamjung and Manang.

The ritual journeys of shamans from different villages merge in the high pastures of Thurchu. Prior to Thurchu shamans from different villages have their own routes. On our journey we followed the route of the shamans from the village of Yangjakot. This route was chosen as several of the TPLS participants including Yarjung were originally from Yangjakot. At the point on the trail where the soul journey ascended the large rock at Howaple we continued following the downward migration trail which overlaps with the landscapes referred to in several different *pye* (see Map 2).

Although the TPLS participants already knew that most of the geographic places on the routes existed, they hoped that the trek would provide concrete (experiential but non-shamanic) confirmation and documentation of their existence. The journey was therefore not only of spiritual importance, but also of emotional, historical and political importance. It was simultaneously a pilgrimage to sacred places and a journey into the past. More importantly, it was a quest for origins–origins which are perceived to be "somewhere in Mongolia" and intimately tied to the shamanic traditions. Oral texts narrate the northward soul journey, the downward migration route and a series of over-lapping physical landscapes. Thus, it was not only the oral texts which were under scrutiny, but also the entire orientation of the shamanic world.

The TPLS trip members none of whom, with the exception of Yarjung, had visited more than a few places on the proposed route, were very conscious of the political nature of their venture. They knew that a successful trip would place them in a much better position to address questions of the past and the cultural embeddedness of the *Pye-tā Lhu-tā*. There was much use of the term 'proof' and on several occasions I heard people saying that they were "going to get proof". 'Proof' referred to verification of the historical migration route as well as the shamanic journeys. Not surprisingly, the trip received considerable attention among the wider Tamu community, particularly in Pokhara.

The 1992 Journey

We leave Pokhara on a sunny August morning in 1992 (Srawan 2049v.s.). We are a group of sixteen–eight participants (seven TPLS

members, two of whom are shamans, and myself), one guide, five porters and two cooks. Our first night is spent in Yangjakot, and the second at the site of the ancestral village of Khudu. At Khudu we are joined by three additional members of our party including Damarsing from the village of Tanting who will act as our guide. The *pye* states that there were houses at Khudu but limited daylight, thick monsoon overgrowth and the need to press on means that we have little opportunity to search for ruins. As we have passed beyond the forests at Kraupu–which mark the outer limits of the local landscape of Yangjakot–we no longer meet villagers walking the trails. We are in the uplands but are not yet high enough to meet the shepherds in the summer pastures. As we walk through what for most of us is unfamiliar territory, the search for evidence of the ancestors becomes more focused. It is, however, a search for a selective ancestral world–for a Tamu past, Tamu villages, the evidence of Tamu habitation.

On our third morning we see the historic village of Kohla[8] for the first time: A small distant treeless area amidst the heavily forested south-facing slopes of the Lamjung Himal. It will take us another two days of walking to reach it. We share the view with travellers from the Lamjung villages who are on pilgrimage to the lake of Dudh Pokhari, young girls holding large bunches of alpine flowers who demand to be photographed against the backdrop of the Annapurna and Lamjung Himal. Bhovar, Yarjung and I linger behind, talking, filming. We catch up with the group shortly afterwards at Chikrei where ruins have been spotted–our first sight of the ancestral villages at close hand. As we clamber around the ruins Khusiman runs past me with a measuring tape. As he passes he shouts "it's five metres long, *didī*" (older sister).

On the fourth night we make camp in a dismal monsoon downpour above the tree line at Naudi Pak. In the early hours of the next morning we make the short hike down to Kohla. I know of its importance. I had been told many times that, "it was the last joint village before the Tamu-mai split into smaller groups and moved down". I was not, however, expecting what we found–the visibly standing ruins of a very large village. With notebooks, measuring tapes, cameras and a video we move through the ruins recording what we can see despite the high monsoon overgrowth.

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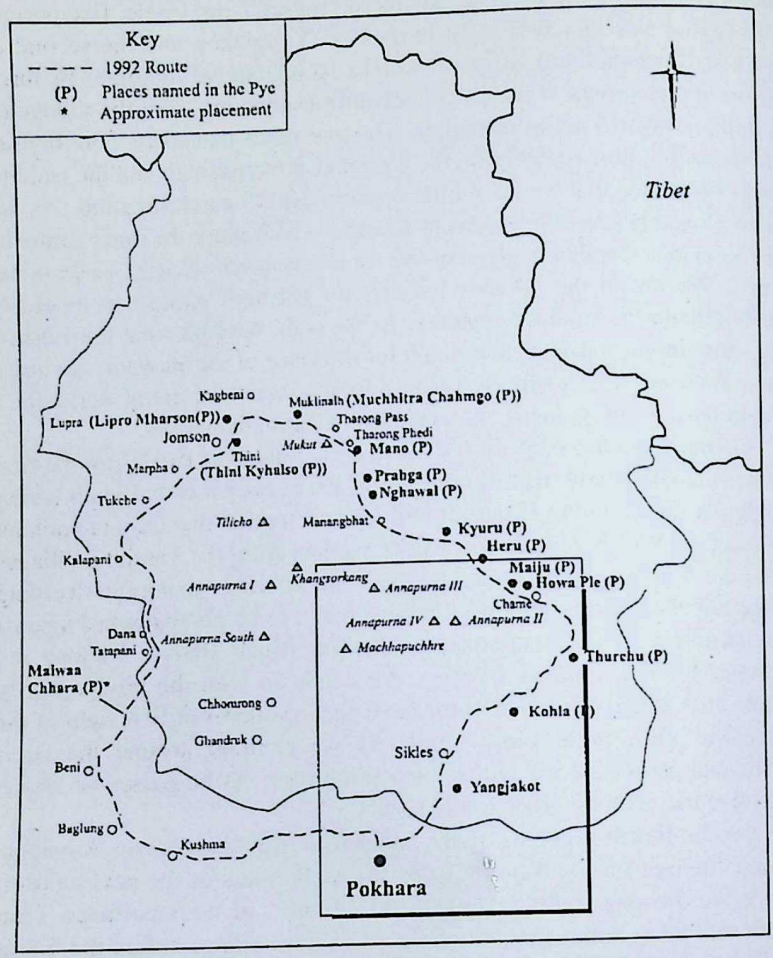
8 Kohla is not actually on the Yangjakot *pachyus'* soul journey. Our visit to Kohla marked a divergence from the soul journey route. It is, however, referred to in other *pye* chanted by the Yangjakot shamans such as the *Lemko Pye* (see below).



Map 2

On the basis of what is visible to us a process of ascription begins to take place which is based on people's knowledge and experience of contemporary Tamu architecture. The largest most prominent house must be the "Ghale king's house". The standing stone to its side—which stands in a relationship to the house that is similar to house/stable relationships in extant Tamu villages—is "the stable". We cannot locate the cemetery, but when Yarjung starts to get pre-trance sensations after touching some large stones, people say "that's probably the cemetery or a place where

rituals used to take place. The ancestors are near here, that is why *Thagu* [eldest son] feels shaky".

As we leave the village Yarjung comments, "we are going to the area where Pakreĩ prowls, I'll become *klhye kahba* [go into trance]. It's okay becoming *klhye kahba* in a ritual, because then I need the protection of Pakreĩ in my body, but up here I don't like it. When I'm shaking things get broken or lost, I get worried about who will look after me."

We walk for hours in a steady downpour, through a landscape devoid of trees. We get lost briefly and someone comments, "I think that the ancestors aren't happy with us, we visited them in Kohla but we didn't burn any herbs for them." In the fading light of dusk, but before we reach Pakreĩ Yarjung becomes *klhye kahba*. Khusiman and I fumble in his pack for his herbs, spilling them all in the process. We build a fire and Yarjung, still shaking, sits in front of it inhaling herbs and reciting *ngo* (incantations). We walk on in almost complete darkness along steep slippery trails. At one stage I slip and fall backwards off the path landing upside down on a steep incline. All my *curā* (glass bracelets) are broken but I am unhurt. I have, someone remarks, been "protected by the ancestors". In the rain and darkness the group becomes split up. It is late in the evening before we finally reach Thurchu and the next morning before we are all reunited.

We spend two nights at Thurchu, fighting for space in the shepherds' huts in competition with hundreds of pilgrims who are enroute to the nearby lake of Dudh Pokhari. Some of our group join the pilgrims and visit the lake, others explain that it is a "Hindu place" and as they are not Hindu they are not interested in visiting it. We cross into Manang district by cutting through the mountains, up and over Yekre where the souls of those who are dying "prowl" in the hours and moments before death. In Manang our route takes on an added dimension. As well as being the trail of the shamanic soul journey, the ancestors migration route and the salt trade route, it becomes other peoples' trails–an important tourist route, the trail down which the "Buddhism-spreading Tibetan refugees"[9] travelled, a

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9 This refers to post-1959 Tibetan refugees whom shamans and their supporters believe to be primarily responsible for encouraging significant numbers of Tamus to convert to Buddhism. Much to the chagrin of the shamanists, Buddhist *lāmās* are now performing *pai laba* death rituals for Buddhist converts. This is seen as a direct threat to shamanic practice and a radical departure from past practices when Tamu *lāmās* collaborated with the shamans and incorporated sacrifice into their repertoire. Small numbers of these 'old' *lāmās* continue to practice.

route dotted with small Tibetan and Tamu villages. Tamu gods, shamans and ancestors thus share their landscape with foreign hikers, Buddhist *lāmās*, Tibetans, and Brahmans from Kathmandu imported to run the local bureaucracy.

At Howaple, in the shadow of the large dome rock which the dead ascend to reach the afterworld, and in competition with the noise of the fast flowing Marsyangdi river, the group practice the singing and dancing of the *pachyu Serga Pye*. The *Serga* sends the deceased to the afterworld in the *pai laba*. The section referring to the local landscape will be sung at Maiju Deurali, the site of an ancestral village, and the point on the route where the human trail goes to the left and the trail of the dead goes to the right up and over Howaple. The two Tamang cooks look on with mild amusement.

At Maiju the construction of the *deurālī*[10] begins. Yarjung, assisted by Bhovar, chisels out the initials 'TPLS' on a piece of flat stone, to be placed in front of the *deurālī* "for remembrance, so that everyone can see that TPLS was here in 1992". The group, the TPLS members, the porters, the guide and the two Tamang cooks, form a circle and the *Serga* begins, at first a little haltingly and then with gusto.

As we continue our journey we pass the villages that are listed in the *pye*, "where our ancestors lived". The list corresponds to that given in the texts; landscape corroborates the shamanic version of the past. In each case the villages appear in the order that they are listed in the *pye*, the names are clearly the same although the pronunciation or in some cases the actual name is slightly different. The ancestors, however, have left little trace of their habitation; the contemporary villages are all Tibetan. The landscape is populated by gods that can be beckoned by contemporary Tamu shamans who live on the other side of the Himal. The valleys leading to Thorang La Pass which is famed and feared among trekkers, are inhabited by Tamu gods. With the Pass in the background Yarjung, sitting on a large stone in front of the camera, chants the *pye* which refers to the area, a list of gods and a description of an area which is simultaneously familiar and unfamiliar. A landscape which he 'flies' over on ritual journeys but walks through 'sight' unseen. Crossing the Pass the following morning we look down, in the early hours of the dawn, on a landscape which incorporates the famous Hindu pilgrimage site of

10 A *deurālī* is a small stone-pile structure built to honour/pacify/request assistance from a deity (or from ancestors) at the entrance to its locale.

Muktinath. In Tamu shamanic geography this area is called Muchhitra Chahmgo.

A high point of the expedition is the side-trip to the village of Lupra (Lipro Mharsõ in the *pye*), a place of past learning for the *klehbri* shamans. Today's village is inhabited by Tibetan-speaking people who have no memory of the *klehbris* and are bemused by the group's earnest enquiries. We are taken to see the *gompa* (Buddhist monastery). Excitedly the group members examine the painted deities on the ceiling, which bear a great resemblance to those on the *klhebri urgyan* ('crown'). As Yarjung films the images he narrates the names of the gods to the camera. As we leave the *gompa* someone points to a miniature iron bird suspended just above eye-level and cries, "look, it's just like the *klehbri* bird". Bhovar questions the villagers, "where did this come from?", "what do you think it is?", but the locals have no idea. We are told of an old monastery which is on the other side of the ridge behind the village. There is talk of sending me and a couple of others up to video and photograph it, but there is no time. We leave. There is a distinct, but unspoken awareness, that our excitement is not shared by the locals, a certain disappointment that they do not realise how "important and historic their village is". At a distance from the village Ba *Klehbri* chants the pye which refers to Lipro Mharsõ. Lipro is 'reclaimed'.

We reach Jomsom. To the locals we are just another group of 'tourists' looking for accommodation; we decide to press on. Time, money and what are always referred to as 'rations' are beginning to run short. Jomsom is not mentioned in the *pye* but the nearby village of Thini is. There are only a few brief minutes in which to video and chant the *pye* which refers to Thini (Thini Kyhalsõ in the *pye*). We are now in Thakali country. In Tukche we buy apples for friends and families and hire a porter to carry them.

The next day we pass the large waterfall of Maiwha Chhara which is mentioned in the *pye* of *Prõprõ*. Yarjung who has never before visited it physically, recognises it immediately as a place that he has visited in trance. The *pye* tells of how the *mho* (demons) who live in the waterfall used to be able to change into people. One day a ritual was held in the village and all the pots and pans were laid out. During the ritual a ladle was stolen and since that day the *mho* have not been able to change into people. According to Yarjung a "king and queen still live in the waterfall". We approach an old man weaving a bamboo basket. "Do you

ever hear the sound of bells and drums coming from the waterfall?" asks Yarjung. "Yes we do" replies the old man.[11]

Two days later we reach Baglung. The new Chinese-built road to Pokhara is closed due to a landslide. In the afternoon we finally manage to get a truck which will take us to Pokhara. In slanting rain, huddled under sheets of plastic, we perch atop the Chinese truck. Through the rain, and between the hairpin bends of the new road, we pass the familiar villages of Birethanti, Nayapul, Lumle. As Dhampus comes into view Yarjung says, "My father had a bad fight with witches in that village about 30 years ago". It is almost dusk when we finally reach Pokhara.

We meet the following day–to celebrate, to apologise should we have offended each other in the difficult circumstances of the trip, to thank the porters, guide and cooks, and to watch the video. We have received messages of congratulations from many people, and requests to watch the video.[12]

The expedition recounted above is the second in the chronology of *Tamu Pye Lhu Sangh* journeys into the land of the ancestors. It formed the basis for construction of new historical narratives and, as "our 1992 trek", it has become part of the history that it was designed to discover. When those who participated in the journey talk about their historical research they trace the beginning of the search for evidence[13] to this trip which allowed them to see and experience firsthand the relationship between the *pye*, the landscape and the shamanic journeys (as opposed to hearing about it from shamans, who usually have not visited the sites themselves). This evidence shifted the discourse about history significantly as it provided a firm foundation on which to counter versions of the Tamu past based on a Hindu interpretation (for which the only evidence is the widely discredited 17th and 19th century genealogies).

Following this trip TPLS members asked me to make contact with archæologists who could help with a research project on the archæology

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11 This brief conversation was conducted in haste while walking the trail. Unfortunately as we had fallen behind and didn't know the area we were unable to stop to explore the apparent similarities of the stories. This is a Magar area and there are similarities between Magar and Tamu shamanic/cultural traditions. Both groups are considered to be 'Mongolian' and are likely to have similar historical origins.

12 The video of our journey was edited by Yarjung with my assistance at the University of Cambridge in the winter of 1993 and returned to Pokhara several months later. It can be viewed by arrangement with TPLS.

13 Those who are aware of Yarjung and Balasing's 1990 trip will trace the beginning of the search for evidence to this earlier trip.

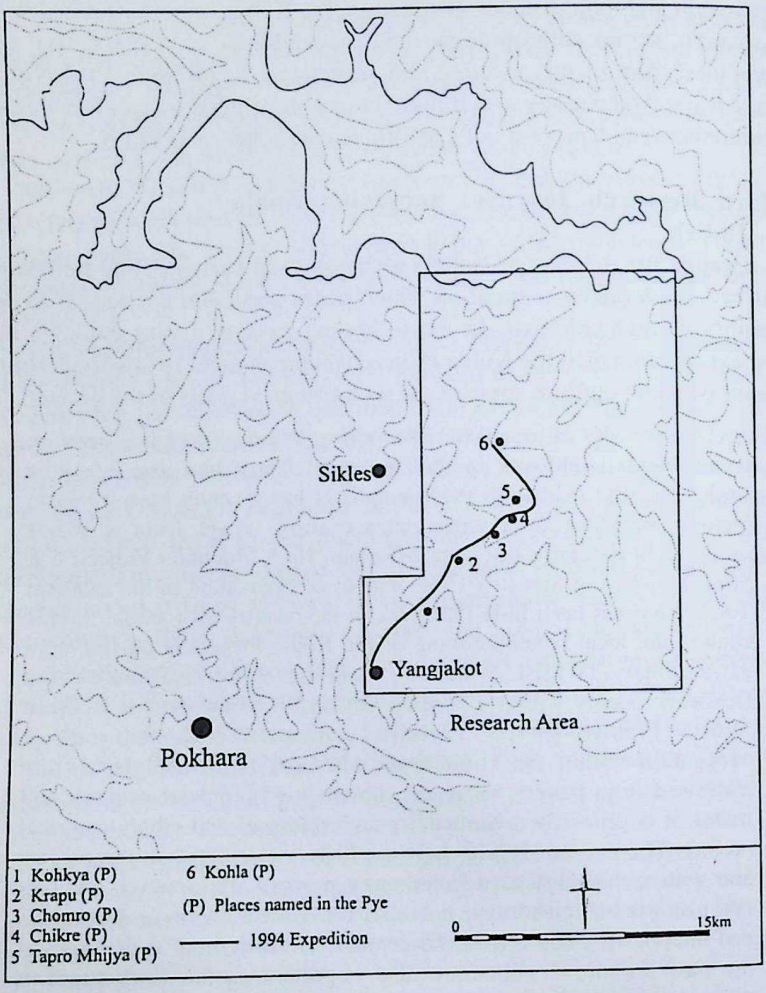
and ethno-history of the village of Kohla and other ancestral villages. In the winter of 1993 Yarjung visited the University of Cambridge to work on a museum collection and while there met Christopher Evans the Director of the Cambridge Archæological Unit, which is part of the Department of Archæology. As Evans (1999:438) explains: "After much discussion and long distance negotiation, the Kohla Project emerged with a shaman, social anthropologist and archæologist as it respective co-Directors". Out of this meeting and subsequent negotiations, the Kohla Project for Archæology and Ethno-History developed as a collaborative venture between University of Cambridge researchers and TPLS.

Third Research Journey: Surveying Kohla Judith

Despite the richness of Nepal's archæological heritage little fieldwork has been undertaken, a situation which poses particular challenges to the Cambridge archæologists. In the following passage Evans explains the context within which the Kohla Project's archæological fieldwork is being undertaken and outlines some of the archæological goals of the project:

> Archæologically, it is a case of working 'blind'. There has been no archæological fieldwork in this region of Nepal and any aspect of study is a first. Although much emphasis has recently been given to historic building /monument conservation, apart from a major initiative in the north (the Nepal-German High Mountain Project; e.g. Simons, Schon & Shrestha 1994) and some excavation in the southern Terai, there has been little fieldwork in the country as a whole. In this context the local commissioning of the Kohla Project is all the more extraordinary. Whilst evidence would never be overlooked, the fieldwork occurs within a specific research framework - it is not a 'World Prehistory-type' exercise concerned with the earliest occupation within the Himalayas. Although traditional issues are addressed (e.g. pottery sequence, the study of highland ecology and trade), it is primarily a community archæological and ethno-historical project. The concern is with how the history is created in the present and with archæology as a 'community process'. Its practice involves not just excavation/survey, but also the collection of oral histories and interviewing sub-sets of the community concerning their views of the past. Cognitive issues are also important as the work involves different ways of 'seeing' the past and landscape: the shamanic, 'folkloric' and our own more disciplined approaches. Separate but equal voices - the documentation of this interaction is one of the main directives of the work, one considered as important as the tangible

results themselves. This is not a matter of making a 'present' of, or bestowing, the past, and it may not be one Tamu-mai/Annapurna archæology that is created. Perhaps foremost amongst the project's aims is the provision of material reference for the Tamu-mai to further build and transform their own history (Evans 1999:441).



Map 3

The first archæological research trip took place in the spring of 1994. The members of the group included Christopher Evans and archæologists

David Gibson and Crane Begg from the Cambridge Archæological Unit, a small group of TPLS members who had participated in the 1992 trip, our guide from the village of Tanting, a group of porters from the village of Yangjakot, a cook, and Yarjung and myself (see Figure 1). The fieldwork, which was very much a journey, consisted of a roundtrip trek of approximately 45 kilometres, at altitudes ranging from 1500 up to 3500 metres (see Map 3). All identified major settlements were surveyed in detail (including full contour mapping), and more informal techniques were used on minor sites. The same route was traversed on the upward and downward legs which provided an important point of reference as records made on the upward trip were extensively revised on the return journey.

Although several settlements were identified during the 1994 and 1995 seasons the main archæological focus was the site of Kohla Sombre ('Kohla, the Three Villages'). Kohla is believed to be the last place the Tamu-mai lived collectively before moving down into the lower villages which they presently inhabit. Kohla is recalled in the shamans' chants and in oral history as a place where 'kings' resided[14]. Kohla is also the highest/northernmost settlement identified to date by the archæologists. Three weeks were spent surveying the ruins of the village, located within a large valley/plateau just below the snow-line at approximately 3,200 meters. Evans describes the site:

> Open on the southern side, it is otherwise surrounded by high forested ridges and is rather like a great amphitheatre. The ruins are imposing and generally stand 1-1.50m high; 57 buildings, possibly representing some 70 - 80 houses, were recorded. Divided into three sectors by a stream and escarpment, it does indeed seem the site of 'The Three Villages'. The vast majority of the structures lie within the central portion, many fronting onto 'avenues' and there is obvious evidence of organised public space (e.g. stairs, yards and platform-terracing).
>
> A number of the buildings have complex plans involving multiple cells/building ranges, yet few seem to have interior connection. While doorways were apparent in a number, extensive collapse often made recognition difficult. Individual ruins which have had value ascribed to them (various 'King's Houses') [see Figure 1] are mainly those which appear most impressive: one in the central village stands 2.75m high (40 courses) and another in the western sector, 2.95m (48 courses) [see Figure 2]; the latter has triangular windows and a number of shelf

14 Although people use the word 'king', according to Yarjung it is more correct to call these leaders 'headmen'.

recesses in its central room. Yet, although of simple 'two cell' plan, immediately beside this western 'house' is located the highest standing building that has no such [ascribed] status (4.00m; 62 courses). It is, moreover, the only structure in which there is definite evidence of a second storey, the upper floor level being marked by joist holes and a level string-course.

Fragments of slag were recovered suggesting industrial activity and a series of horizontal water-mills located along the western stream. Much pottery was found across the northern quarter of the valley floor. An area with few old structures, many pastoralist shelters are sited there and it is possible that their construction involved the robbing of stonework.[15]

One of the most remarkable aspects of the village site is its apparent ritually focused spatial structure. An enormous dolmen-like setting (a great capstone naturally balanced/ slipped onto uprights), lying at the foot of the back-slope and opening onto the village, immediately strikes one upon entering the valley. A commanding geological 'presence', it is distinguished by a large 'shrine' set within its interior [See Figure 3]. Two much smaller dolmen-/cist-like 'shrines' are located at either end of the southern edge of the village centre. Although other such settings may have escaped detection, these three 'megaliths' define a triangle, whose central southern axis is marked by a large standing stone. Whilst standing stones were found on another village site...and others elsewhere may have been toppled, the formality of the evidently religious architecture at Kohla is without immediate parallel...Supporting the attribution of kings at Kohla, the scale and formal spatial organisation of the village sites, the evidence of craft specialisation and industry (pottery, stone-working and slag), and the discovery of forts, a dam and trail-side posts all speak of a 'developed' social organisation and even possibly some manner of (proto-) state. Whilst an inference that could be undermined by the cross-settlement zone distribution of pottery types (though this could be the result of up-mountain /lowland trade), the standard quality of drystone construction and uniform architectural style suggests that the ruins represent the remains of one group (Evans 1999:444-46).

Yarjung

Kohla is a very important place for the Tamu-mai. Our *pye* and the shamans' oral history tell us that many important things happened at

15 From a Tamu shepherd's perspective it is more accurate to describe this activity as the re-use of stonework.

Figure 1: By a standing stone in the courtyard of one of the "King's Houses": Two of the Kohla Project co-ordinators, Yarjung Tamu (far right) and Judith Pettigrew (centre), TPLS members and shamans visiting Kohla during the 1994 expedition. (Photo: C. Evans)

Kohla. Our ancestors decided to live at Kohla after a group of hunters visited the area while hunting deer and sowed some grain. The following year they returned and found that the grain had grown and decided to build a village there. Each Tamu village was founded by a different clan or group of clans. Kohla was founded by three clans – the *Pam-mai*, *Kohl-mai* and the *Lem-mai*.

When we arrived on our archæological trip the first thing that I did was to burn *pru-mai* (herbs) to the local *sildo naldo* (god of the area) and to the *khe-ma* (ancestors) to let them know that we respected them and to ask their permission to do our research in their area. I wanted to find the *chhokõ* ('cemetery') so that we could locate where the bones of our ancestors are so that we could give them proper respect and not disturb them during our work. In Tamu villages the *chhokõ* is usually a bit outside the village in a northerly direction as that is the direction of 'heaven'. The graves are marked by stones although nowadays some people build cement *chhokõ*. We started searching on the northern side of the village but we couldn't find anything. Chris suggested that we search inside the village which we did although I don't believe that it is possible that the *chhokõ* could be inside the village. We never make our *chhokõ* inside villages. In fact we searched every part of the village and the

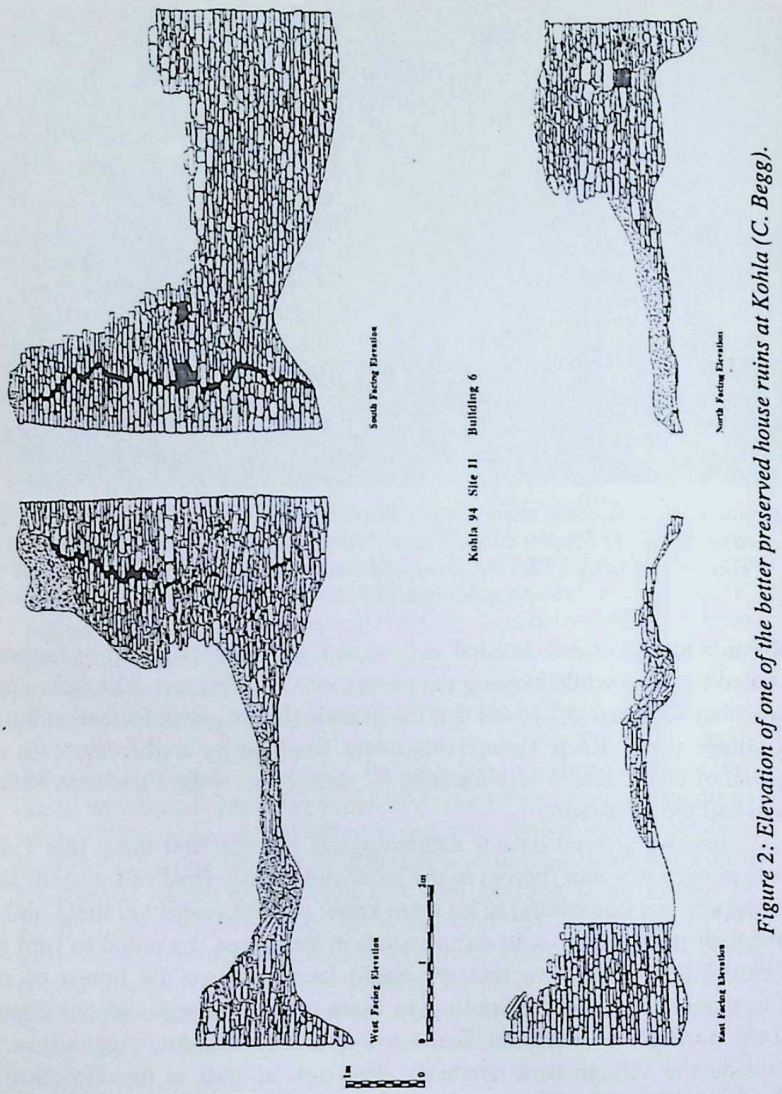


Figure 2: Elevation of one of the better preserved house ruins at Kohla (C. Begg).

surrounding area but we were not able to find the *chhokõ*. This puzzled me, but Chris feels that we are unlikely to find our ancestors bones as there is so much acidity in the ground at Kohla and also lots of erosion.

The first time we visited Kohla it was during the monsoon and because the grass was so high it was difficult to see clearly. When we re-

Figure 3: Archaeological reading: "The great stone setting at Kohla-a natural megalith with a boxshrine set within its interior" (C. Evans). Shamanistic reading: "Ūm-ta-te, the very large stone mentioned in the pye from which people called out messages to the village. There is no shrine inside it" (Y. Tamu). (Photo: C. Evans)

visited I immediately saw *ũm-ta-te*, the very large stone from which village caller sent out his messages (see Figure 3). *Ũm-ta-te* is mentioned in the *pye*. Nearby there was a small rock cave where we found the body of a dead cow. Chris thought that this was a shrine (*tẽh laba klho*) as he felt that the space was formally laid out in a manner that he would expect in a ritual place. He thought that maybe the cow had been sacrificed. It is not a shrine. The dead animal must have been old and not able to keep up with the others so the cow herders probably left it in the cave with grass and water and that's where it died. At one of the other places that Chris calls a shrine I started to become *tahraba* (pre-trance shaking) during our 1992 visit. I think that place must have been the house of a *pachyu*. I agree with Chris that the place on the other side of the village is a *tẽh laba klho*.

Lemkorhõ Pye tells the story of Lemko and also describes a bit about how our ancestors lived at Kohla. Here I provide a brief summary of this important *pye*.

The Klye headman at Kohla wanted to rule over all the villages in the area and decided to collect taxes. He told his advisor Lemko to go all the villages in the surrounding area and collect the taxes (*sermãsõ*). None of the villagers wanted to pay but with difficulty Lemko persuaded them to do so. Lemko's *asyo* (wife's brother) Aangichyõ lived in Taprõ Mhijyaye Thoh where Lemko had been born. He owned a mill by the river and took a little of the grain that he ground for people in payment. This meant that he was richer than most villagers and so the headman wanted a larger *sermãsõ* from him. He refused to give anything, saying that he earned his payment whereas the headman was taking a tax and giving nothing. Lemkorhõ was in a difficult position. He couldn't argue with his *asyo*. So he went back to Kohla without Aangichyõ's tax.

The headman was angry and told Lemko to return to collect the tax but his *asyo* refused a second time and Lemko returned empty handed. The headman told him that if he didn't collect the tax from Aangichyõ he would lose his job and all his wealth. Lemko was frightened and begged Aangichyõ to pay. His *asyo* still refused as he thought that it was unfair to tax the villagers. Lemko was very upset but decided that he had better keep his master happy even through he would have to turn against his *asyo*.

Lemko brought a case against his *asyo* which was judged by all the men of the village. They fined him double and treble the tax he owed. There was a great argument between Lemko and his *asyo*. Aangichyõ shouted "you have taken my heart and my leg". Lemko went back to

Kohla and the headman rewarded him by making him his advisor for life. Aangichyõ was furious and that night he put a curse on Lemko. Lemko who was asleep in Kohla had a very bad dream and awoke in terror. After that he became sick with fear and never recovered. A few days later he died. The headman was very upset that Lemko had died and decided to do a *pai* for him. He asked Aangichyõ for the *syol-asyo koi*, (cloth given by *asyo*), the *chu*, *kekyã* (goats), *tohkyu*, *kohkyu*, *thukyu* (sheep into whom Lemko's soul would be placed before travelling to heaven and the companion sheep), and *sundo chyu*, *aoli ki* (special kinds of rice) without which a *pai* cannot begin. But Aangichyõ refused. The headman went to look for a *pachyu* and *klehbri* to do the *pai*. He couldn't find any who would do it without the *asyo koi* and other things Syõla *Pachyu* was a greedy man and when the headman offered him more than the usual payment he agreed. He made the *pla* (efffigy of the dead person) and decorated it. He made it talk and made the food that had been offered to it disappear as he had magical powers. After three days he told people that Lemko had reached Targila[16].

Lemko had not reached Targila. He was stuck in Heni Nhoye Chhaja, a place somewhere in the Himalayas on the way to heaven. His soul wandered in search of bodies to inhabit but it could only go into dead bodies. He would find the rotting corpse of a mouse and enter it so the body would come alive, but it only become more rotten. Between the rainy season and the dry season nine *klehbris* and seven *pachyus* passed through Heni Nhoye Chhaja. They heard a noise "pey-ju, pey-ju" and wondered what sort of animal or bird made that sound. They looked around and saw a disgusting creature that looked as though it was made from rotting flesh. It wanted to speak and bowed down to them. The chief *klehbri* asked, "What are you and what do you want of us?" The creature answered "I lived in Kohla before my death. My name was Lemko. During my life I gave my *asyo* great trouble and because of that he cursed me and when the headman tried to do my *pai* my *asyo* refused to give the *asyo koi* and other essential items. Without these things I can't cross the river Hansyulu Kyu to Targila".

The nine *klehbris* and the seven *pachyus* went on their way. When they reached Kohla they asked if anyone had died. They were told that no one had died but then the villagers told them that a few years ago Lemkorhõ had died but they had done his *pai*. The chief *klehbri* explained to the villagers that the *pai* was done incorrectly and that Lemko had never

16 There are many *Chõ Kyui* terms for 'heaven', this is just one of them.

reached Targila. The headman was very upset and called for his horse and rode off to look for Lemko. When he reached Heni Nhoye Choh he listened for the "pey-ju, pey-ju" sound and then he saw the hideous creature and held out his shawl to it and said "If you are really my honest and wise advisor Lemkorhõ, come to my shawl". The creature bowed nine times as Lemko would have done when he was alive and came slowly to the shawl. The headman gathered the creature in his arms and sobbing held it to his heart, then he returned to Kohla.

He wanted to re-do the *pai* but still the *asyo* would not come nor send the required items. The headman visited Aangichyõ three times and took all his valuables with him on his third visit but still the answer was "no". Without the *asyo koi* and other essential items it was impossible to do the *pai*. Then the headman chose a clever boy and told him to go at night when everyone was asleep to the mill and steal a bit of cloth. After that he had go to Aangichyõ's house and steal a little millet and then go to the rice beater and steal a little rice. The boy returned to Kohla with all the items and Lemko's *pai* was repeated. This time it was performed by a descendent of the famous Pakraī *Pachyu* and an unnamed *klehbri*. At the end of three days the headman opened his shawl and it was empty. The creature was gone and the headman knew that Lemko's soul had reached Targila at last.

From the point of view of ritual practice, the main point of this *pye* is that you cannot perform a *pai* without the essential objects, if you do it incorrectly it will not be successful and the dead person will not reach heaven or become an ancestor. The story of Lemko was the last event that was made into a *pye* and today we chant it during the *pai* and if we do not chant it the dead person will not reach Targila. From the point of view of Tamu social relations/social organisation, this *pye* is also extremely important as it tells the story of the beginning of taxation, how the social relations of hierarchy changed and how people resisted that change. It also shows that it is possible to use supernatural ways to resist change and that people sometimes go against what is believed to be the correct way to behave towards kin.

Reflections on History Making

Judith

Although our Tamu colleagues believe Kohla to be very old, without excavation and scientific dating, it is impossible to come to a definitive conclusion about its antiquity or those of the other ruined settlements. Evans states that:

> ...the great size of the trees growing on the walls at Kohla and Khoido suggests considerable age, perhaps 500 - 800 years, and their actual abandonment could have been much earlier. Whilst the ruins are spectacular, they do not appear to be particularly 'complex' inasmuch as there is no evidence of deep sequences. Not mounded through settlement succession, the sites appear relatively shortlived. Such measures of complexity are, of course, only archæological readings of the materially obvious and may have little relevance for social status of the sites. That much pottery is present (which will provide a basis of inter-site settlement analysis and the study of trade), and there is evidence of craft specialisation and the suggestion of a planned formality of settlement, could undermine this too easily made estimation (Evans 1999:448).

By the end of our first survey in 1994 our TPLS colleagues were eager to continue the project and to begin the process of formally requesting permission from the government to excavate Kohla. While Christopher Evans and I supported this request we felt that it was important that the Project receive a wider mandate from other Tamu organisations and members of the Tamu public. On our return to Pokhara we took part in a series of public functions including a large meeting to which all other Pokhara Tamu organisations and prominent members of the public were invited. At this meeting support was overwhelming and we received the wider mandate that we felt it necessary to obtain before proceeding further.

The Kohla Project has completed two seasons of survey—the season recounted above which focused on Kohla and other sites in the uplands, and a season which focused on lower ruins in the vicinity of the extant villages of Yangjakot and Wachock (see Figure 4)—as well as a reconnaissance trip to the Manang valley in 1995. Evans (1999) suggests that it is likely that the lower structures, all of which are placed on hill-tops and are of poorer quality stonework, probably mark the territory of the Kaski Kings and date to after the 12th century. Prior to undertaking the survey fieldtrips we made contact with His Majesty's Government Department of Archæology and subsequently had extensive negotiations and meetings with the Director and other members of the Department. In conjunction with HMG Archæology we have received permission from the Government of Nepal to excavate the village of Kohla beginning in the spring of 2000.

The 1994 and 1995 expeditions of the project, although designed to be detailed fieldwork trips, are viewed by TPLS activists and Yangjakot villagers associated with the Project as descendants of the 1992 trip. Each

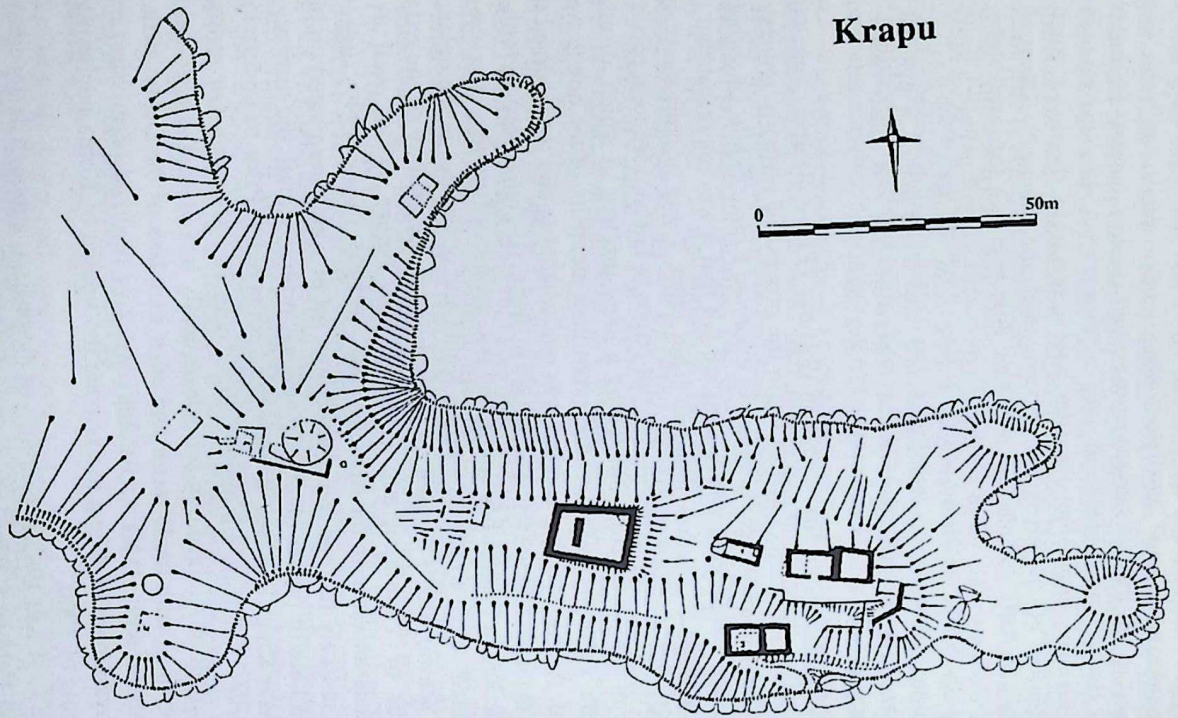


Figure 4: Plan of the ruins atop Krapu (C. Begg).

of these subsequent trips re-triggered the process of history-making in landscape. Like the earlier trip the archæological field trips they have led to the creation of narratives in which past and present are closely intertwined. They have become events which are variously interpreted by different actors with different agendas.

Archæological research has charted new routes into the ancestral landscape. The land has been re-mapped differently and the archæological maps do not always coincide with the existing interpretations (Evans 1999). The archæological maps have expanded indigenous understandings of the landscape and have also provided new material for interpretation. That the local and archæological interpretations are somewhat different, although a source of much discussion, has to date been relatively unimportant.[17] The interpretations co-exist in domains that are simultaneously overlapping and separate. Local people and archæologists talk both to each other and past each other. What is important is the journey, for it is the journey which provides the context and opportunity for interpretation and the construction of narratives.

My initial role as a broker for the project has continued and a considerable proportion of what I do during fieldwork trips is to act as an interpreter. What I interpret includes the usual range of linguistic and cultural matters, but also includes mediating between different ways of thinking, knowledge and interpretation as shamans, local people and foreign archæologists engage in an on-going dialogue about the Tamu past.

Archæological surveys have created a degree of previously denied accessibility to the ancestral world. The emotionality of journeying into

17 The major differences of interpretation have been discussed earlier in the article. During field trips small differences in interpretation and the reading of material culture took place on a daily basis. For example, when surveying a site above the village of Wachok Chris suggested that the marks on a large rock were signs of ritual activity. When I discussed this with our porters they laughed stating, "Those are the marks we make with our *asi* (sickle) when we are sitting at a rest-place (*nhẽ*) on the trail having a chat and a smoke". Local interpretations of the nature and number of certain structures (e.g., houses versus temporary structures) have been challenged at several sites by the archæologists. Interpretation is, however, an ongoing dynamic process and just as archæologists influence local interpretations, local interpretations also influence archæological interpretation. During a recent conversation Chris stated that he would "probably no longer interpret the cow at Kohla as being sacrificial" adding, "maybe it was just a dead cow."

the landscape of the ancestors, and into the landscape of the ritual journey is further enhanced by actual physical contact with remnants of the ancestors' material culture such as pottery sherds. Unlike the 1992 TPLS journey the range of people who can at some level participate in these expeditions, who can 'touch and be touched', is very wide. The return of the first archæological expedition to Pokhara attracted a wide audience to the *kohībo* who came to 'look and feel'.

Journeying of the type undertaken by TPLS on the 1992 trek is an attempt to show that the places mentioned in the *pye* do exist, and thus to prove the historical authenticity of the shamanic version of history, which can be counterposed against the historical inauthenticity of the 17th and 19th century Hinduised genealogies. This perspective is informed by moral overtones the righting of wrongs, the separation of pure from impure. Geography fosters a moral continuity with the past. Landscape and morality are linked in a manner reminiscent of that described by Basso (1984) for the western Apache. Among the Apache, moral narratives are constructed in landscape. One does not necessarily need to hear the stories but only to see or remember the landscape of the stories, "the moral significance of geographical locations...is established by historical tales with which the locations are associated" (Basso 1984:44). What is different in the Tamu case is that the encoding of morality in landscape is based not on historical tales but on narratives constructed in the present, but which relate to the landscape and memories of the past. It is also different in that it concerns historical morality rather than everyday conduct. Through landscape, a 'moral' shamanic practice and an 'immoral' imposition of Hinduism can be diametrically opposed. The shamanic is the part of history which has to do with the journey and a Tamu past. Hinduism is to do with a post-genealogy history.

The ancestors provide the link between landscape and morality. The land must be negotiated in a particular way–to defile it is potentially to defile the ancestors. To respect the ancestors and at the same time manage the practicalities of everyday life demands ongoing negotiation. The situation is similar to that experienced by pilgrims (Turner 1974:182-183).[18] As pilgrims leaves home behind, they becomes increasingly sacralised through the encounter with sacred places and objects, and increasingly secularised as they must cope with the pragmatic demands of

18 These journeys cannot at present be considered to be pilgrimages as they lack the institutionalised conventionality of a pilgrimage. They do, however, have the potential to become pilgrimages.

daily life in a strange, temporary and often inhospitable place. Problems are created by this juxtaposition of roles and sometimes the delicate balance is lost.

Following our brief 1992 visit to Kohla it was suggested that we had become lost because we had not burnt herbs for the ancestors. The arbiters of morality in landscape are the shamans who decide when the Otherworld needs to be appeased. Shamanic and lay understandings do not always coincide. The frequency of hailstones on our archæological field trip to Kohla worried some members of the research team who urged Yarjung to burn herbs to placate the ancestors. Their concern was that we were making the ancestors unhappy thereby causing them to send hail. Yarjung, working on a shamanic understanding of, and relationship to the landscape, usually refused, explaining that the causes were natural and not supernatural. It was, as he explained, simply "bad weather not unhappy ancestors." The ability to mediate between landscape and the ancestors provides an additional domain of moral authority for shamanic practice.

Journeying contextualises past in present, future in past. By using the rhetoric of the present (loss of culture) and the need to save culture (whose locus is in the past) shamans provide images of a future in which the culture of the past is revived. They also firmly locate time in landscape– the past is as 'real' and locatable as the present, a continuity they hope can be maintained in the future.

While 'proof in the landscape' provides the basis of a reconstruction of history, I suggest that journeying is the actual construction of historical narrative–the writing (or walking) of history.[19] As an alternative to the committal of historical account to paper, journeying is the construction of a performative historical narrative located in landscape. As Tilley (1994: 28) writes, "movement through space constructs 'spatial stories', forms of narrative understanding". As Tamu revivalists walk up and down the trails from town to high Himalaya they construct, both for themselves and others, a chronology which is simultaneously past and present, and past in the present. A narrative is constructed which includes and interlinks the actors of the past with the actors of the present. Thus a perspective is created which associates the contemporary actors with the telling of history, and thereby establishes authority. As the shamanic and the

19 The model for interpretation based on journeying is located in the framework of the shamanic. Journeying, mapping and interpreting are basic shamanic activities. The shaman maps the upper, middle and lower worlds, travels the trails into other worlds, confronts, mediates, negotiates and returns to the community to provide interpretation.

historic interact, the establishment of history-making authority is simultaneously the enhancement of shamanic authority.

To understand the potential that journeying has in conveying an interpretation of history, it is necessary to consider the audience that history-making is directed towards. While it might be important to provide written accounts of the Tamu past for outsiders–to explain and share perceptions of the injustices of the past, to reinterpret, to assert an identity based on one's own cultural practices–it is more important to provide an account for one's own people. While published historical accounts may get the attention of a small number of well-educated people, most Tamus still live in villages where educational levels are low and books an expensive luxury. For some sections of village society, understandings of the past continue to be based on the Hindu genealogies. Genealogies which many believe created the supposed status difference between the *Kugi* and *Sōgi* clan groups. While some villagers are part of the wider movement to re-examine the Tamu past, and others are aware of it and eager to learn more, there are people who premise their interpretations of social life on ideas of clan hierarchy endorsed by the 17th and 19th century genealogies. These people dismiss the activities of revivalists as "the talk of people who have got a chip on their shoulders".

The majority of people are more interested in the local events of the village, the lived experiences of daily life. Of interest also is the surrounding landscape–the forests above the villages where people go to cut wood and fodder, the more distant pasturelands, the rocks, trees and rivers where the world of the human and the spirit overlap. The ancestral landscape is one which the Tamu shepherds traverse, where people go to cut bamboo and gather herbs, and walk through enroute to pilgrimage spots. These places have well-known and emotive names, like Kohla, Chomrong, Thurju, Dudh Pokhari, places which a great many people from all clans aspire to visit; places that exist in consciousness, seen or unseen.

While the current written re-examination of Tamu history undertaken primarily by activist town-dwellers does not normally receive much attention from villagers, history 'located' in the landscape is a different matter. A high profile visit by town-dwellers with maps, video cameras and equipment accompanied by foreigners and local porters who are "going to the old villages to study Tamu history", gains enormous attention. The enroute stop-overs are anticipated and prepared for, the reasons for the measurement of village houses are wondered about, the amount of money denoted to the school and at the mother's dances is widely discussed and

for a few days the visit is the 'talk of the village'. Attention is re-focused a month later on the return trip, and then again at the requested showing of the video of the trip. This attention is reinforced by the hearthside reminiscences of the porters and assistant cooks, hired from the villages, and the villagers' own stories of what the visitors did, where they went and what they said.

The stories are 'brought home' in a manner similar to Kwon's (1993:67-74) account of stories recollected in the evenings by Orochon reindeer herder-hunters from Siberia. As in the narratives of Orochon herder-hunters, the stories of what happened in the Tamu landscape can only be shared if one "has a certain shared map. The location, where an observation or a recollection is made, is not referred to by east or west" (Kwon 1993:67), but by the location of events or in relation to a particular geographical feature. Thus the stories and places construct and reproduce each other (Tilley 1994:33). As with the Orochon, Tamu stories create and alter social relations, and differentials exist between the old and the young. The teller of tales, however, can enjoy temporary elevation to a status 'above' that of his or her normal one.

Narratives are constructed and located in the ancestral landscape which they are intended to address–narratives which include the events of the journey, interspersed with images of the actual history-making activities. Thus an account of how the cook used to send *Thagu* ('eldest son', a support worker from Yangjakot village) through the forest at Chikrei carrying mugs of tea and biscuits for the researchers and their helpers, who were measuring the old houses, drawing the *kuni* (rice grinder) we found near the trail and looking for the *chhokõ,* is a recollection of a rather amusing daily life event and simultaneously the conveying of historical information: At Chikrei there are old houses, material culture which is continuous with the present, and the burial place of ancestors.

The potential for reinterpretation is extensive. History becomes meaningful, relevant, close by. Links are created to the present–trails along which both past and present can be experienced. Events which are contemporary are interrelated with powerful visual images of the past. The ancestors' *kuni* can be looked at, touched, held. It becomes a relic. The old buildings can be inspected and wondered about; everyone can enter the discussion about why the *chhokõ* was not found.

On our journey to the ancestral landscape, villagers told us of places they knew of and of things to look out for. The possibility exists for everyone to be a historian, for stories about places, people, gods, spirits, ancestors to be remembered, brought out, constructed, interpreted, and

reinterpreted. The possibility, however, does not exist for everyone to be an expert; this remains the domain of the few, those who have entered the landscape to research it; those who have established the authority to investigate the past and make it speak in the present–those who have made the journey; those also, who have the knowledge to speak to the past, those who know the *pye*, those who have the migration genealogies, in other words, the shamans. The research team could not have operated without a shaman as a central figure. For those who are interested, and many clearly are, shamanic practice narrates and locates the past and by doing so locates itself.

As identity is connected with place (Tilley 1994:15), journeying contributes to the construction of identity. The potential that this type of journeying has to contribute to identity is considerable, particularly when considered alongside the already established role that the ritual journey plays in the ongoing re-creation of identity. Journeying associates those making the journey with what is considered to be quintessentially Tamu–the world of Tamu ancestors. Those who make the journey are simultaneously seen, and see themselves, to be associated with the essence of a cultural past. Despite their residence in the town, by journeying they establish their lineal continuity with the culture of their ancestors.[20] The people who go on these journeys show themselves to be town-dwellers who 'can walk'. Thus, the stereotype of townspeople who 'cannot walk' is debunked. Not only can they walk, but they walk further into the Tamu landscape than many villagers who have never been in the *hyē* (pasturelands/uplands).

To journey into the ancestral landscape, to have 'dealings' with the ancestors, not only establishes a lineal continuity with the ancestors but also a moral continuity which can be matched against the perceived 'immorality' of the town. Journeying from the town up to the *hyē* and back knits together several domains of Tamu social life/experience which people feel are drifting too far apart. It creates a shared Tamu *hyulla* ('country'/locale)–a *hyulla* which includes town-dwellers, villagers and ancestors. A common sense of landscape is constructed in which town and country, past and present can be merged. Journeying is thus transformative in the sense that a pilgrimage is transformative (Turner 1974:204-206)–those who have made the journey have at some level transformed how they are perceived and how they perceive themselves.

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20 There is a widespread opinion that the purest most authentic Tamu life/culture is lived by those who remain in the villages.

The aims of journeying in the first instance are intra-ethnic rather than ethno-political. The main audience is other Tamu-mai. Journeying, however, is also political in a wider domain. It is a visible and public reinterpretation of the past based on indigenous knowledge, enacted by the descendants of those who see their histories as having been submerged. It is thus simultaneously an assertion of identity, and the reassertion of history. It is the re-socialising of an ancestral world, and conversely it is the re-socialising of the contemporary world. Despite the designation of the pasturelands as 'government land', and their further division into grazing rights belonging to different Tamu villages, the relationship between those who journey and the ancestors transcends this mundanity. The ancestors whose remains are in the landscape and the revivalists who journey to the places of the ancestors have claims on each other. They are guardians of each other. The goal is not literal control of the land, rather, the land is a vehicle for history-making and the construction of identity. It is therefore a vehicle for the control of the revivalists' own lives.

Journeys into the landscape of history are simultaneously journeys into the geographical and metaphorical landscape of the shamanic. Shamanic landscape overlaps with the landscape of history, reaching northwards to the Afterworld and origins, and southwards like history to the landscape of the present. Like the past, shamanic practice exists in other spaces and other times. To discourse with the history of the landscape is to discourse with the landscape of the shamanic. The historical significance of landscape is enhanced through ritual which, "invests historicity in sites that do not themselves embody events of the past" (Rappaport 1990: 153).

The performance of ritual activities, as illustrated in the account of the journey described earlier, imbues (or re-imbues) geographical location with both shamanic and historical significance. For the audience watching the video of the journey, the chanting of the *pye* at Maiju, Lupra and Thini not only invests these locations (which for many would have previously only been names) with historicity, but associates the conferring of historicity with shamanic action. The shamanic legitimises both history and landscape. In this relationship the shamanic is the senior player. Shamanic action in landscape has been continuous, unceasing. History, in a non-Hindu interpretation, has been discontinuous. History in landscape is being relocated and re-created by those who have never left the landscape–the shamans. As interest is refocused on the past, it is simultaneously refocused on the shamanic. At a time when shamanic

practice is on the decline and under pressure from other ideologies, this kind of history-making is contributing to the revival of shamanic practice.

Conclusion

Judith

The Kohla Project is a multi-disciplinary community archæology and ethno-history project involving local people and foreign researchers. The primary aim of the Project is to discover more about the Tamu past by drawing on archæological, shamanic and ethno-historical insights in a manner that enables as wide a range of local people to be as actively involved in the process as possible. To date the emphasis has been on archæological and shamanic understandings of the past with anthropological study focusing primarily on the translation and analysis of the *pye* and the social dynamics of the Project. Although this work will continue, from April 2000 onwards ethno-historical research will be the key contribution of the anthropological aspect of the Project.

The Kohla Project incorporates different perspectives and agendas; it was designed to do so. As excavation gets underway and the ethno-history aspect of the work expands, other unanticipated dimensions will emerge. The Project has been founded on the principle of collaborative research. It is committed to the concept of multiple voices, which may complement one another and/or contradict one another. Commitment to both scholarship and multiple, possibly divergent voices, is from my perspective the most challenging and exciting aspect of the Kohla Project. An essential dimension of this work is the ongoing need for reflexivity during all phases of the Project. Thus, regardless of the richness of the ethnographic/archæological data or the apparent 'fit' between local and academic interpretations, the Kohla Project will always incorporate as an aspect of its work the concept that it is 'a project about a project'.

What this dimension is concerned with is the politics of history-making, how people use the past for diverse purposes which may or may not articulate with wider political issues. How looking at the past is an attempt to re-formulate identity and relations of hierarchy in the present and thereby ensure that they are different in the future. By necessity this aspect of the Kohla project includes consideration of the roles that academics, shamans and other Tamus play in this process of history-making, and of the methodological, professional, personal and ethical questions that our and their involvement raises (for further discussion of these issues see Pettigrew 1995).

Yarjung

I feel that the Kohla Project is very important to enable us to understand more about our past and our cultural and religious traditions. At a time when our traditions are under threat and the young townspeople are not learning how to do things the Tamu way. it is especially important to emphasis the strength of our traditions and the importance of passing them on. I am pleased that foreign researchers are working with us. It is very important also that people hear the history that the shamans know. Otherwise they will believe things that are not true and that have caused great trouble among the Tamu-mai like the idea that the *Sōgi* are 'superior' to the *Kugi*. The false genealogies created this idea. There are no 'higher' and 'lower' in Tamu society, all the clans are equal. At the same time that we are trying to discover the truth about the Tamu past some people are writing versions of history that in some way support the false Hindu genealogies (e.g., Tamu 2055v.s.). This is mainly because these people are government employees and therefore are in a very difficult position. I am worried about this because as they are educated they are listened to. This makes it much harder to overcome the problems that divide us.

During our Kohla Project research trips we found and surveyed the ruins of many villages. Each time we made a trip we discovered more about the landscape of our past and I felt closer to my ancestors and very proud of my religious and cultural traditions. It is obvious that this is the Tamu past but we need to know more details about how long ago our ancestors lived at Kohla, how long they lived there and why they left. This information can only come through excavation. Also the other village ruins in the surrounding area need to be researched. This is the first time that the Tamu people have done their own research and this is the first time that they have researched together with foreigners.
Chhyajyalo [greetings]

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Commentary

ILLUSIONS OF GRANDEUR: THE STORY OF THE LUMBINI MASTER PLAN

C. K. Lal

1. The Stage

Himalayas are the backdrop. On a clear day, one can even see Dhaulagiri (8,167m), a peak not less than 130 km north, towering over the green mountains of the Mahabharata range. Closer are the Himalayan foothills of Chure. These elevations offer a perfect setting for Lumbini–a sparsely forested seat of pilgrimage set amidst paddies worked by the farmers of villages all around.

Human settlement in this part of the world is as old as the mountains. A fossil tooth of an early hominid, *Ramapithecus*, was found in the nearby town of Butwal. In the neighbouring villages of Nawalparasi, chipped stone tools dating back about thirty to forty thousand years have also been found, proving the antiquity of human settlement in the area.

However, huge gaps do appear, probably because plains at the foot of rain-fed slopes do not let permanency take root. Heavy rainfall concentrated in four months of the year combined with fertile silt brought by young rivers create an environment that is as conducive to forest growth as to the development of human settlements. Washed by the turbulent tributaries of the Ganges, these plains are prone to flooding even today; and rivers change their courses as a matter of routine.[1]

The struggle between human beings and nature for the control of these fertile plains must be one reason why the settlements lack continuity. People would toil to build hamlets, a flash flood will carry that all away to the Bay of Bengal, and the forest would reclaim the vacated area soon after. They would rise again to raise temples to reaffirm faith; but a fire, or a plague, or attacks from more vigorous claimants would raze them all to ground, once again paving the way for the rapid growth of forest cover

1 Gyawali and Dixit (1999) studied the Tinau River in this area and found that it had changed its course several times within half a century.

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after the monsoons. Centuries must have sped past before the Shakya and Koleri clans firmly established their kingdoms in this area.

It was here in Lumbini that Lord Buddha was born. Emperor Ashoka made a pilgrimage to Lumbini in 249 BC and erected a pillar in its Sacred Gardens. An inscription on it reads: "Twenty years after his coronation, King Priyadarsi, Beloved of Gods, visited this spot in person and offered worship at this place, because the Buddha, the sage of Sakyas, was born here."[2]

The site has for long periods been lost to history, and then periodically rediscovered, as it was by Chinese pilgrims like Fa-Hien (403 AD) and Hiuen Tsang[3] (636 AD) who have left detailed accounts of the surroundings. An updated Lumbini Chronology[4] has been given in Table 1.

The setting, as it were, is fit for the Lord, complete with emperors, mendicants, warriors, pontiffs, pundits and kings competing to pay their respects in their own chosen way. However, almost all of them seem to have chosen not to remember Lord Buddha's supreme command–that the world is an illusion, a Maya.

2. The Drama

The chase started the day the U. N. Secretary General U Thant wept. On a visit to Lumbini in 1967, this Burmese believer was moved by the dilapidated status of one of the holiest shrines for all the Buddhists of the world.

King Mahendra grasped the significance of the tears of that illustrious Buddhist. Those were the days of Panchayat Democracy based on *Land and Climate Theory*,[5] and slogans of achieving in a decade what others had taken a century to accomplice. Even on other fronts, the late sixties were the days of dreams--the bigger, the better. Big dams to power huge

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2 The original inscription on the pillar is in Pali. English translation is given on a signboard hung outside the fence. Also quoted in Pathak (1995).

3 These names are also spelt as Fa-hsien and Hsuan Tsang. My spelling follows Nehru (1998[1934-35]).

4 Based on the Lumbini Chronology presented by Gurung (1998).

5 This expression was coined by Dr. Prakash Chandra Lohani to ridicule the Panchayat System's apology for itself: the claim that it was a democracy uniquely suited to the (likewise unique) climate and soil of Nepal. It so happened that Dr. Lohani himself became one of the flag bearers of Panchayat soon after.

Table 1: Lumbini Chronology

623 BC	Birth of Gautam Buddha[6]
249 BC	Visit of Emperor Ashoka of Maurya Dynasty
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403 AD	Visit of Fa-hien
636	Visit of Hiuen Tsang
1312	Visit of Ripu Malla
1896	Excavation of Ashoka Pillar by Khadga Shamsher and A. Führer
1899	Excavation works by P.C. Mukherjee
1930	Petition of Mahadan Upasaka to Prime Minister for Restoration
1932-39	Excavation work by Kaisher Shamsher
1956	King Mahendra's call for its development at the Fourth Assembly of World Federation of Buddhists
1967	Visit of U. N. Secretary General U Thant
1970	Formation of U. N. International Committee for Development of Lumbini and Establishment of Lumbini Development Committee (LDC)
1971	Prof. Kenzo Tange prepares a Conceptual Master Plan for the "Development" of Lumbini
1978	Final Master Plan of Kenzo Tange prepared
1985	Lumbini Development Committee is upgraded to the status of Lumbini Development Trust (LDT) to give it more autonomy
1996	Excavation of marker stone at the Nativity site by archaeologists of the Japanese Buddhist Federation (JBF) and LDT
1998	World Buddhist Summit held at Lumbini
1999	In response to vacillation by the JBF, His Majesty's Government of Nepal decides that it will build the Mayadevi temple from its own resources

factories to achieve economies of scale, network of highways to prepare for the cars that prosperity will most surely bring, and fitting monuments

6 A reader of a previous draft of this paper commented that the birth of the historic Buddha is usually dated ca. 480 BC. This chronology is based on Gurung (1998) who uses the date 623 BC. This date is also preferred by all other official publications in Nepal, the most recent example being a leaflet published by Nepal Tourism Board (n.d.)

to feed the egos of architects and engineers who sincerely believed that the American or the Soviet prototype could be duplicated anywhere in the world. Japan had risen almost from ashes, so could any one else. More so a country like Nepal, with its strategic location, natural resources and docile population imagined willing to lay down their lives at the command of the King, an incarnation of God Vishnu Himself.

In 1970, His Majesty's Government of Nepal (HMG/Nepal) instituted the Lumbini Development Committee, and soon after its national committees were formed in Bhutan, India, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and even the U. S. A. The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) contributed nearly a million dollars for the preparation of a Master Plan that was completed only in 1978.[7]

The brain behind the plan was Prof. Kenzo Tange from a resurgent Japan (see Tange and Urtec 1978, 1979). He opined that "the overall intent is to reinforce the symbolic entity of the Lumbini Gardens in its simplicity and clarity."[8] But the scale he chose for his expression of simplicity was monumental; with intensive river-training, a man-made lake, decorative canals and even utility buildings with huge vaults capable of intimidating visitors by their sheer volume. Aesthetically, and technically, the Master Plan is a master piece–it's as perfect as can be conceived. And that precisely is its main problem. One can't buy perfection on the cheap.

3. The Story

The Master Plan started being pursued in earnest after the formation of the UN International Committee for the Development of Lumbini in New York under the chairmanship of General Padam Bahadur Khatri, Permanent Representative of Nepal to the UN, in 1970. Soon after, the First Advisory Panel Meeting of the LDC was held in Tokyo. A second was scheduled to be held in Kathmandu in the December of 1971, but it had to be postponed due to "disturbances" in the region (that is, the declaration of independence by Bangladesh, its repression by Pakistan and the Indo-Pak War), and could be held only in March 1972. Mr. Lok

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7 According to Pratap Khatri, a LDT official, the amount may have been higher. Prior to the Master Plan, various studies, like the socio-economic survey of the surrounding area done by Ferdinand E. Okada, were also commissioned by UNDP. LDT has no accurate record of the cost incurred. Even UNDP-JICA describes the Master Plan as "the product of a million dollar investment by UNDP in mid-1970's" (UNDP and JICA 1999:14).

8 Gurung (1998) quotes this statement without identifying his source.

Darshan Bajracharya, who had been a private secretary to King Mahendra, was appointed chairman of the Lumbini Development Committee in 1975. After nearly three years, a Tripartite Meeting between the UNDP, HMG/Nepal and the Japanese was held in Tokyo, which at last finalised the Master Plan. HMG/Nepal approved it in the same year without any delay. The very next year, King Birendra inaugurated the Bhairahawa-Lumbini Road, and the Master Plan was proudly presented at the International Buddhist Seminar held on the occasion of Lumbini Year 1979.[9]

In the seventies, when the Master Plan was made, Lumbini was still a very sparsely populated area, hence utilization of an area of 25 square miles must have appeared relatively modest. Out of these, only 3 square miles were covered directly by the Master Plan–one square mile each was to be given to the Sacred Garden, the Monastic Zone and the New Lumbini Village that was sought to be developed to support the system. The surrounding six square miles were to be turned into a restricted area and an additional sixteen square miles were to be maintained as an agricultural buffer zone (see Figure 1).

The orientation of the complex in the Master Plan is north-south. The New Lumbini Village and the Cultural Center are to the north while the Sacred Garden is in the south. A central canal with greenery and walkways on both its banks is a prominent feature of the whole system. An eternal flame completes the picture. East and west of the central canal are the monastic zones leased out to countries or organizations to build monasteries. At the end of the central link are buildings of the Cultural Center.

From the beginning of the Master Plan, people at the helm assumed that there would be no dearth of funds. HMG/Nepal took the initiative to acquire the land. But that was the end of it. Money for the Master Plan wasn't forthcoming from the believers who were expected to turn the place into the Mecca of Buddhists. The huge establishment set-up to manage the system remains grossly under-used as neither the number of pilgrims nor the donations have reached anywhere near expectations.[10]

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9 Based on information given in UNDP and JICA (1999) supplemented by personal communication with Pratap Khatri of LDT.

10 There are more than 150 regular employees with LDT. Its Member Secretary and Project Manager have four-wheel drive vehicles for their use. Its office at Lumbini may be called modest, but it sure is not spartan.

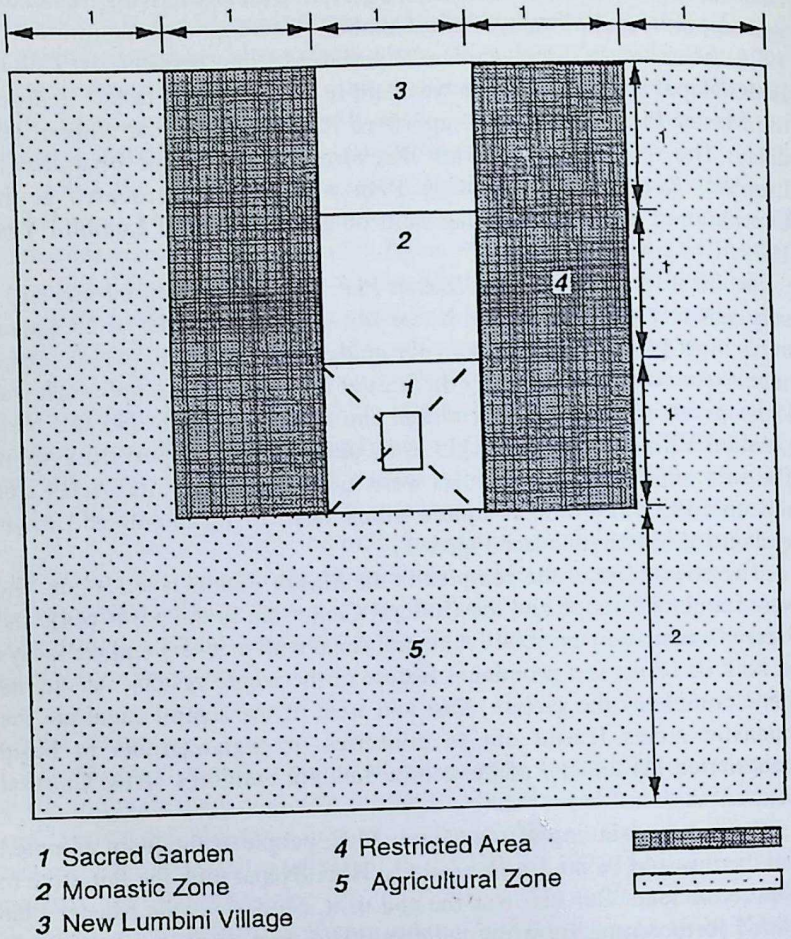

Figure 1: Lumbini Development Area

However, construction in the Monastic Zone hasn't lagged behind. Myanmar has built a gold-painted stupa and a monastery. Close by are Nepali monasteries built the Thamel way–match-box brick and concrete houses without character. According to Rachana Pathak (1995), a Western scholar of Himalayan Buddhism observed that Lumbini was well on the way of becoming a "religious Disneyland". That's quite charitable in comparison with what Biresh Shah, a Kathmandu-based architect had to say after he visited the recently completed Chinese monastery: "It appears

as if the set of the Forbidden City from *The Last Emperor* has been transported and reassembled at Lumbini."[11]

Other facilities envisaged in the Master Plan remain a dream, some say a pipe dream. The canal is traced on the ground, but most of the work remains to be done. Electricity lines are there, but underground ducts have not been laid. There is no sewer, no drain and no water supply. Meanwhile, monasteries straight out of Hollywood sets dominate the landscape. The land called Restricted Area (numbered 4 in Figure 1) and Agricultural Zone (numbered 5 in Figure 1) still seem to have been left to develop on their own, with no planned interventions whatsoever.[12]

4. Reasons to Smile

It's not all tears all though. In the area acquired for development (numbered 1, 2 & 3 in Figure 1), thousands of trees have been planted and it gives the look of a garden. The crane is associated with an important lesson in Prince Siddhartha's life,[13] and it is perhaps appropriate that the International Crane Foundation runs a Crane Sanctuary at Lumbini (LCS 1999).

The road from Bhairahawa to Lumbini has been upgraded and paved, and it is no more an arduous journey from the airport. Even though the Museum lacks sufficient exhibits, the building has been completed according to the Master Plan with the assistance of Government of India. A world-class Library-cum-Research Institution has been built by the

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11 Personal communication.

12 Figure 1 has been adapted from a site report by engineer Surya Bhakta Sanganche dated 2041 v.s.. Even back then, he had recommended, "...for the development of Lumbini, it is essential to control the building of factories and residences in the area earmarked for the project, so that planning can take place and if and when the government has to acquire all land, the amount of compensation shall be less" (concluding sentence of a personal report not available for citation, translated from Nepali). Sanganche had worked with LDT for nearly a decade and he prepared this report to point out the importance of developing the area as a totality rather than continuing with the piecemeal approach.

13 The legend has it that once Devdutta shot a crane and Prince Siddharta nursed it back to health. When the question of ownership of the bird was brought to King Suddhodhana, he is said to have ruled that the right of a person who wanted to save a life was stronger than the right of a hunter who wanted to take it.

Reiyukai, Japan, though it is a moot point whether such a lavish facility can be maintained by the Nepalis once the donors leave.[14]

The government of Sri Lanka has built a Pilgrim Lodge. In contrast to the accommodation for scholars at the Library-cum-Research Institution, this facility is of ascetic proportions and an example of the other extreme. Inmates of this facility are expected to cook outside, which is not very convenient during the windy summer months. This building has become another example of design fads dominating Lumbini, even though with all good intentions.

The management set up established in the seventies continues to function to this day, even though many changes were introduced into it after the *Jana Āndolan* of 1990, so there is some kind of continuity in the commitment of the government. These are some positive aspects that bring a smile to the face of a lay visitor or a believer alike.

5. Tragic Scenes

Life is full of suffering, said Lord Buddha; and that's the feeling that overwhelms one after the positive developments have been seen and experienced. The litany of woes are just too many to enumerate. Here, however, are some of the main ones:

- Even though local people were to be one of the main beneficiaries of the development effort, they have almost no hand in either the policy making or the execution of the Lumbini Master Plan. Some of the benefits of this multi-million dollar development could have percolated down to the people if the buffer zone were developed in consonance with the Master Plan in association with the owners of the land. As it happens, most benefits have fallen into the hands of land-sharks and the tourism-Mafia from Kathmandu while the locals have been completely left out.
- On a higher level, pitiful Vajrayana monuments that represent Nepal's own sect are dwarfed by the opulent monuments of other sects. While there may be some logic in not discriminating between the sects, no effort seems to have been made to appropriately represent local faith despite the fact that the management has remained in Nepali hands.
- The Master Plan is too ambitious. At today's prices, it would cost about US$ 78 million to complete the remaining works, the cost of

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14 LDT officers frankly admit that a *monthly* electricity bill of around NRs. 100, 000 is not a small sum for their perennially fund-starved establishment.

the total works being about US$ 98 million.[15] To put it in perspective, this amount is about ten percent of the total *annual budget* of the country. With less than twenty percent of works completed nearly thirty years after the conceptual Master Plan was made, it is perhaps necessary to realize that certain wrong assumptions were made right in the beginning.

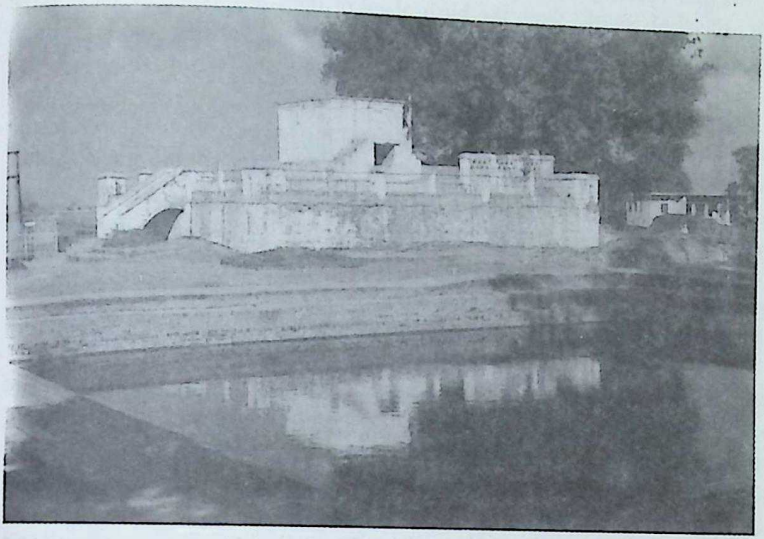

Figure 2: Post-card of Mayadevi Temple and the giant Pipal Tree.

- The Mayadevi Temple (Tiwari 1996) that had existed from the time of Khadga Shamsher was pulled down and the giant Pipal Tree made popular by thousands of photographs and post-cards (see Figure 2) was cut to facilitate archeological excavations.[16] Excavations went on for

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15 Cost updates were prepared by the Institute of Engineering Consultancy Services for LDT in 1999. I was personally involved, in my capacity as a practicing civil engineer and urban planner, in the updating exercise. Estimate updates are not covered by the professional code of confidentiality as they are intended for fund-raising.

16 Contrary to popular belief, this tree had no direct relation with Buddhist mythology. It was a Pipal Tree, and Mayadevi is said to have given birth to Prince Siddhartha holding a Sal Tree. The tree could not have been more than a century old. However, it was *perceived* to be holy by its association with the holy site and the decision to cut it down is still questioned by many observers.

years in which archeologists of Japanese Buddhists Federation (JBF) would arrive by chartered planes, live in star category hotels and do the digging at their own pace.

- There are wild allegations doing the rounds in Lumbini that the Japanese made some quick bucks by selling the timber from the holy Pipal Tree, by carting away valuable artifacts and even by marketing the 'holy earth' from the birth place of the Lord. None of these have been proven, but perception is strong. It does not help matters much that the Japanese were secretive about the whole business of excavation.
- The excavations were left with covering-sheets over them, while the statue worshipped for ages remains lodged in a temporary shelter nearby. When JBF vacillated about keeping their word and building a temple, HMG/Nepal decided to build one from its own resources.[17] This is a widely hailed decision, but still awaiting implementation. Nepali architects and engineers argue among themselves about what has to be conserved and what needs development while the World Heritage Site continues to languish.[18]
- The area is becoming crime-prone, as entry is not regulated. The lavish life-styles of some of the monks aggravate the situation, specially when 'cooking' and 'cleaning' ladies are brought from outside and lodged at monasteries. Such incidents can't be proved, but acrimony at the local level is fairly strong.
- Some monasteries have brought militant Buddhism to Lumbini and local Hindus allege that certain monks harbor strong anti-Hindu feelings. Accusing fingers are often pointed at the Sri Lankan monks. A confrontation was recently avoided when the venue of a religious

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17 The first draft of this article made that basic argument: HMG/Nepal must forget the Japanese and immediately build a temple that it can afford to build and, more importantly, maintain without external assistance. After the government decision was announced, this paper has been modified to argue that it is not just the temple, but the whole Master Plan that needs to be adapted to suit our realities of affordability, willingness and sustainablity.

18 Prof. Jiba Raj Pokharel, an eminent conservation architect, has been given the responsibility of designing the temple. However, others, engineer Shankar Nath Rimal being most prominent among them, question the idea of putting up heavy foundation to support the building in an area where a lot of archeological excavations still remain to be done. For details about the design of the proposed temple, see Humagain 2056 v.s.

summit called by the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) was shifted at the last moment to neighbouring Bhairahawa, but who is to guarantee that Lumbini will remain incident-free in the future too? VHP is a militant Hindu organization that lays claim on Buddha as the ninth avatar of Lord Vishnu. All Buddhists resent such a patronizing effort at assimilation, but militant Buddhists take the threat a little more seriously.

- A disturbing sign of the shape of things to come can be noticed in the proliferation of mosques in the area after Lumbini started getting international attention. If a temple building spree were to follow, as is already being advocated by organizations like the VHP, the situation may well get out of hand. This area has a sizable Muslim population, even though Hindus are in the majority. International links are attributed to organizations assisting the buildings of mosques and VHP zealots repeatedly point out the organized nature of Islam and Buddhism to create fear in the minds of majority Hindus. Locals believe that development like this and that described above were triggered by the ostentatious monasteries in the Monastic Zone and the questionable life-style of some of the monks residing there.
- The million dollar question, a seventy-eight million dollar question to be precise, remains: Is it possible to implement the Tange Master Plan? Privately, all agree that it is quite unlikely any time soon; and publicly they never leave off hoping for the impossible–international donations. Five years ago, a group of Nepali engineers had recommended that the Master Plan needed to be updated.[19] But opinion leaders from the Nepali Buddhist community continue to believe that funds would not be a problem if only the government allowed the foreign community do what they wished to do.[20]

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19 The group was led by engineers Bhubneshwar Lal Shrestha, Umesh Bahadur Malla and Amrit Shresthacharya. A review of the Master Plan is the main thrust of their recommendation dated 27 Chaitra 2051 v.s.

20 In a talk program hosted by the Nepal Heritage Society in Kathmandu in 1999, Prof. Surya B. Shakya forcefully argued that if only the government relaxed visa regulations and extended custom exemption facilities a little more liberally, foreign donations would not be a problem. Shakya is a leading Buddhist intellectual who was the Vice-Chairman of LDT for nearly four years (1992-1996) and has first-hand experience of difficulties encountered in raising donations. When this writer asked whether a revision of the Master Plan was the only feasible option, he answered in the negative. According to him, the Master Plan can still be implemented without major changes.

Here, it is important to understand that, as Mr. N. Morita said during the World Buddhist Summit (1999), "[It] is big and small at the same time. Mecca took 175 years to complete as a holy complex". Given the amount of foreign aid flowing into the country through government channels as well as NGOs, $78 million may not appear to be too ambitious, but there are reasons why Lumbini has failed to figure on the international aid-map with any prominence.

First, the mantra of foreign aid is poverty alleviation and Lumbini has failed to link itself up with it in any way. Donors see it as a prestige project of the elite. Secondly, foreign governments or charitable institutions perhaps find it a little difficult to assist a purely religious undertaking. After all, they are answerable to a secular constituency. Perhaps to respond to such sensibilities, the World Buddhist Summit 1999 adopted Nepal's declaration of Lumbini as the Fountain of World Peace (LDT 1999).

Thirdly, LDT had a credibility problem in the beginning due to its close association with the powers of the Panchayat establishment. During the Referendum of 2036 v.s., a whisper campaign alleged that funds from LDT were being illegally siphoned off to finance the publicity of the non-party option. Fourth, LDT suffers from an image problem too. Most of its officials are Hindus, and protest campaigns (to my eye malicious ones) often surface from the more militant Buddhist monks who claim that the government transfers fund from LDT to develop Hindu shrines elsewhere.[21]

Fifthly, the Lumbini agenda appears to be firmly in the hands of the UN System and the JBF. In the turf-conscious world of donor agencies, that must be one sure-fire dampener of enthusiasm. And last but not least, the rampant *ad-hocism* in the management of LDT

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21 The cause of this rumor can perhaps be traced to the fund raising campaign for the Pashupati Area Development Trust spearheaded by top-level Panchas in the late eighties when Her Majesty the Queen headed that organization. All government employees back then were prevailed upon by their respective Zonal Commissioners to compulsorily make a 'voluntary contribution' of one day's salary to the fund. It's quite likely that LDT officials were also made to follow such an instruction and Buddhist monks made an issue out of it. In my view this seems likely to have been magnified many times over by the rumor mill in the course of time, for it is extremely difficult to siphon off funds from one trust to another just like that.

fails to inspire the kind of confidence necessary to attract donors. For all these reasons, Lumbini's development indeed is, as Morita said, big and small at the same time.

- Worshipped for nearly three decades, the Master Plan has acquired the status of a holy document that simply can't be tampered with. This opinion exists despite the fact that Prof. Tange himself is reported to have said that no plan is ever sacrosanct.[22]
- Assuming that the Master Plan is implemented fully with financial contributions from the well-off Buddhists in Japan, Korea and Hong Kong (and that's quite an assumption by itself) the second question that arises is whether it will be possible to maintain such a lavish facility in such extreme climatic conditions. The few buildings that have been recently completed already appear as if they have existed there from the day of the Shakyas, all for the lack of upkeep.
- Lok Darshan Bajracharya, former private secretary to King Mahendra, was at the helm of the LDT for many years. He is said to have remarked that Lumbini belonged to all the Buddhists of the world, and not just Nepal. Famous words, if only all the Buddhists of the world also agreed with it. As it happens, UNESCO sends high-profile visitors, the UN sends jet-setting experts, the Japanese do their own thing–like the Hokke hotel or the Peace Stupa that dominates the skyline,[23] but the primary responsibility for keeping the place going still rests with HMG/Nepal. HMG/Nepal is expected to extend hospitality to international visitors, provide free visas to visiting monks and scholars who lodge at various monasteries' guest houses, and extend duty-free import facilities for the designer tiles to be fitted in the bathrooms of every foreign monk's residence. A tall order; the question is, will not it be better to 'act locally' while continuing to 'think globally'?
- The organization of the LDT is dominated by politicians. Its chairman is the Minister for Youth, Sports and Culture Sharad Singh Bhandari, the Vice-Chairman Gajendra Man Lama, who is kind of de facto chief, is a political activist of the Nepali Congress Party, the Secretary

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22 Like many other important nuggets, this information too comes from the encyclopedic knowledge of Mr. Pratap Khatri. He has been with the LDT for a long time and is a store-house of information not recorded anywhere.

23 The Hokke Hotel, in the words of an LDT official, "is a resort of the Japanese, by the Japanese and for the Japanese". The Peace Stupa is a non-plan structure being built in the memory of a Japanese Buddhist monk who was assassinated at Lumbini some years ago.

General Bimal Sharma, who has to function as the Chief Executive Officer, has been a teacher of history, but even he is primarily a political appointee. It will be too much to expect them to inspire a creative re-thinking on the whole idea of developmental conservation. The status quo is in the interest of all the players: the religious groups, the politicians, monks, as well as the local elite.

That is an outline of the sorry state of affairs. In the name of cost-cutting, the Kathmandu office of LDT was abolished about a year ago and its officials were expected to relocate to Lumbini. Apparently it was a penny wise pound foolish decision, because all of the high officials continued to spend most of their time in the valley, with the added advantage of neither having to follow regular hours nor being available to any one other than their political bosses. The decision was rescinded recently, and LDT once again opened a small office in Kathmandu, but by then damage had been done–many valuable records were either misplaced or lost and continuity in important contacts was disrupted.

In sum, nothing seems to be happening to achieve the objectives of the Master Plan, despite the periodic flurry of vacuous activities like visits by UN experts or the World Buddhist Summit.

6. Crying for Attention

The Lumbini Master Plan itself needs to be generally updated to suit Nepali reality, but specifically, these are some of the issues that need immediate attention:

- In the absence of a plan for archeological investigations, random excavations have disturbed the inherent serenity of the place. Engineer Shankar Nath Rimal argues that the site probably contains much more than has been found to date. Nobody has taken the trouble of even refuting him.[24] Whatever may be the case, one is bound to agree with the position of the LDT officials that either the excavations must stop, or there must be a proper plan for them. The present haphazard approach to excavations cannot go on for ever.
- The second and most important issue is the land management aspect of the Master Plan. If a review is not done now, it may never be done again. Even more importantly, while much is made out of

24 Using arguments based on geometry, Rimal (1998) hypothesizes that the site may have been designed by Emperor Ashoka and that it may contain more holy associations with Lord Buddha's life than are known at present.

monumental building plans, the land use plan envisaged in the Master Plan has not been adhered to. If unplanned urban development is allowed to proceed, the intent of the Master Plan will be lost even though some of its forms may dot the landscape like tributes to a dream.

- The Mayadevi Temple has been a shrine of great importance for the Hindus of the area who gather at its site every year for a Mela. There should be no delay in building a temple. If a design acceptable to all can not be arrived at, one that is not unacceptable to the many may have to be chosen, but anything in the place of the current temporary shed will do for the present.
- While agreeing that a World Heritage Site belongs to the whole of humanity, it should also be agreed that waiting for international donations forever is the wrong kind of 'global thinking'. Perhaps HMG/Nepal should start doing what it is capable of doing and then let the donors come at their own pace.

In one of those side-shows that keep taking place at Lumbini, a Korean Christian named Prof. Kwaak Young Hoon, who teaches at Harvard Divinity School, was sent by the United Nations System to "save" Lumbini in December of 1999. Prof. Hoon holds a doctorate in architecture and city planning and after visiting Lumbini he observed,

> They talk about a master plan. I see no master plan. Lumbini was designed by architects who thirty years ago were imposing their own ideas on the world. You have these grandiose monuments to the egos of the leaders of Buddhist countries... Beyond these grandiose million dollar structures of Lumbini lie poor, struggling villages which seem never to have seen even one paisa of the millions poured into Lumbini![25]

There is little to disagree with in the diagnosis of Dr. Hoon, but listen to his prescription: "Turning Lumbini into a spiritual world city. Thinking locally and globally simultaneously and acting accordingly, and declare it a World City ...". *Deja vu*, another Master offering to serve up solutions, since the first Master hasn't succeeded! After those pious pronouncements, Prof. Hoon hurried back to spend his Christmas with his mother in Seoul. It appears that if we continue hoping for foreign funds, we have to learn to live with such intellectual gladiators from the UN System forever.

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25 As reported by Barbara Adams (1999).

7. Curtains? Not Quite Yet

Were U Thant to visit Lumbini now, he would most surely weep all over again. However, this time it would be in repentance for the havoc that his first tears have led to. Lord Buddha's glory lies in his teachings, not in the monuments dedicated to his memory. But that's a lesson best understood by honest followers of Buddhism.

In conservation, Prof. Eduard F. Sekler, Chairman Emeritus of the Kathmandu Valley Trust, is fond of emphasizing that "...sustainability must be understood not only in the material and economical sense, but also from the point of view of cultural and spiritual survival".[26] It appears that the Lumbini Master Plan has not given enough attention to the material, ignored the economical, and has sacrificed the rest to build monuments, rather than spiritual and cultural spaces. It has itself become a monument–to illusions of grandeur–and its execution has remained completely divorced from ground realities.

The Ariyan (a Pali word for noble) Eightfold Path of right view, right aim, right speech, right action, right living, right effort, right mindfulness, and right contemplation lead to that Middle Path, which giveth Vision, which giveth Knowledge, which causeth Calm, Insight, Enlightenment and Nibbana (nirvana), so said the Lord. Rest is all illusion.

Planners and architects have more faith in their knowledge than in Lord Buddha. Their quest is for excellence, not enlightenment, let alone nirvana. For far too long, monks and scholars of Lumbini have treated its Master Plan as some kind of a divinely ordained document. It is getting late to realize that it is as much of an illusion as life itself, and there is not much point in chasing it any further.

Acknowledgments

This commentary has drawn a lot from various conversations that the writer had with officials of the Lumbini Development Trust, both in

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26 This idea was dwelt upon in more detail in a paper that Prof. Sekler presented at the International Conference on Urban Heritage Conservation and Sustainable Development held in Kathmandu in November 1998. According to my understanding, material sustainability concerns itself with sustainable development defined as "meeting the basic needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (WCED 1987), while economical sustainability includes concerns about affordability, willingness-to-pay, capacity of up-keep, and thinking about growth as well as equity.

Kathmandu as well as in Lumbini. Its revision benefited from the comments on its previous draft by Pratyoush Onta, Biresh Shah and two unnamed readers. While their contribution is most gratefully acknowledged, the writer would like to reiterate that observations, interpretations and opinions expressed in this commentary are solely his own unless directly attributed to others.

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NEPALI AND NEPAL BHASA LITERATURE IN ENGLISH TRANSLATION: A REFERENCE BIBLIOGRAPHY

Mary Des Chene and Bhaskar Gautam, compilers[1]

Introduction: Notes for an Informed Translation of Nepali Literature

Mary Des Chene

In 1997 we published a bibliography of writings on Nepali women in conjunction with a collection of commentaries and reflections on Nepali women's movements (SINHAS 2(2):406-33). The present bibliography accompanies Manjushree Thapa's article *With Love and Aesthetics: Notes for an Ethical Translation of Nepali Literature.* The general impetus behind such bibliographies is to ease the way for readers interested in further reading. The earlier bibliography, as we noted, was certainly not exhaustive, though it was extensive. The same can be said of this one.

Translations of Nepali and Nepal Bhasa (Newari) literature, for reasons touched on in Thapa's article (this volume), are often published by small presses and/or in relatively obscure periodicals. And many are out of print. This makes compilation of a bibliography more difficult; its value concomitantly greater.[2] It is, to our knowledge, the first such compilation. As such it allows us to survey the terrain of translation.

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1 With thanks to the editors of *RE:AL, The Minnesota Review, Seneca Review* and the *Journal of South Asian Literature* for help in completing entries that appeared in their publications, to Wayne Amtzis, Larry Hartsell, Ann Hunkins, Michael Hutt, and Manjushree Thapa for providing or completing citations for some of their own work, and to Ramesh Parajuli, Manjushree Thapa, Deepak Thapa and especially Pratyoush Onta for help in completing various entries.

2 The section of this bibliography on writings in English *about* literature is particularly incomplete and skewed to more recent publications. We felt that it would still be of use to readers to include it here, but we intend to provide a more complete bibliography on this topic in the future.

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Though each and every translation has not been tracked down, we feel confident that this bibliography reveals the main trends in translation over time.

Besides its utility as a list, then, read as a narrative in conjunction with Thapa's article it should also relay some tales about the social history of translation, especially for those familiar with the much larger literary corpus from which these translations emerge Who has been/is being translated (and who is not)? Who translates whom? Within an author's *oeuvre*, which works have been translated (and which have not)? What trends are observable over time? What presses and periodicals publish literature of Nepal in translation? What sort of 'canon' of Nepali literature in English is effectively being created by these scattered acts of translation?

Those interested in pursuing the questions about choices internal to translation raised in Manjushree Thapa's essay, can use this bibliography to locate multiple translations of a single work.[3] Or, simply by reading the work of various translators, a sense can be gained of the variety of theories of translation that, implicitly or explicitly, shape the works which stand for 'Nepali Literature' in English. The bibliography also brings out patterns and partnerships–who works alone, who collaborates, who self-translates, which pieces have the benefit of a native speaker of each language involved in the translation; are there discernible differences in the results? The bibliography often (though not always) informs about which translators are themselves poets or fiction writers and which are not. A reader interested in the question of whether it "takes one to translate one" can compare translations selected by this criteria. Used in these and other ways, it is our hope that this compilation will contribute to producing both better translation and more critical readers of translation.

How instructive the bibliography is for our readers thus depends on how creatively they choose to use it. But certainly it has been instructive simply to compile, leading me to reflect on two aspects of the issue, raised in Thapa's article, of the place of English translation within the political landscape of Nepal. The first aspect is the political slant of the cumulative body of translated work. A browse through the bibliography will make it clear that the literature of the left ('progressive literature' in

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3 Unfortunately, not all of these will be immediately apparent as we were unable to include detailed contents for anthologies and collections of short fiction and poetry.

the terms of Nepali literary criticism) makes scant appearance in English translation. One does not find, for example, the poetry of Balbhadra Bharati, Rupchand Bista, Deviprasad Kisan, Yuddhaprasad Mishra, Matrika Pokhrel or Purna Viram, nor the fiction of Rishi Raj Baral, Ghanshyam Dhakal, Ichchhuk, Ismali, Khagendra Sangraula, or Devika Timilsina. Gopalprasad Rimal gets relatively little attention from translators; Parijat might be taken for a minor figure of the Nepali literary world were one to judge by her place in the landscape of Nepal-in-Translation.

There can be many reasons for this situation, from the political proclivities of translators to their assessments of literary worth (not, I would note, entirely unrelated matters). But even were one to assume that the, politically speaking, middle-of-the-road tendency in translation choices were a matter of happenstance or wholly to do with literary criteria, the key point in terms of the issue Thapa raises is that the result is very specific: progressive literature barely registers in translation. As she points out, English is a language of power in Nepal. She urges translators to be alert to the fact that, with each choice of text for translation that they make, they are significantly contributing to the formation of an English language Nepali literature canon. The effects of translation into a language of power that she urges us to worry about are compounded by the relative absence of progressive literature in English translation. Regardless of what text a translator ultimately chooses for translation, informed translation needs to take account of participation in the creation of a body of work with a particular politics–and every piece of Nepali literature has its politics–in a language of power.

The second aspect that Thapa's article and the compilation of this bibliography have led me to reflect on has to do not with the politics of literature, but with the politics of languages. Thapa poses the question, "What is the English translator to do about the fact that she is not just a product, but an agent of English in Nepal, helping to spread a language which easily marginalizes national languages?". In this context she explores questions of language interior to the act of translation. She discusses, for example, the possibilities of indigenizing English, a process more deeply realized in the English literature and translations into English of many other countries–one need only think about English literary works from India, the Caribbean, Africa or Latin America for example. Readers who use the bibliography to track down works by a range of translators will have before them a substantial body of work with which to reflect on what Thapa identifies as the dominant practice thus

far, translation with "illustrative intent", on its effects on the language of translation, and on other possibilities.

But more, or better (in Thapa's terms more *ethical*), translation into English does not resolve the broader socio-political issue she raises:

> it is undeniable that in Nepal, there are very real power imbalances between the English and Nepali languages, and between the Nepali language and other national tongues. Migration between languages does not occur here without pain. ... despite the fact that there are few Nepalis for whom English is a mother tongue, the language occupies a startlingly privileged position as compared to the country's other languages. This fact, and the context of contemporary language politics, both raise ethical concerns for the English translator of Nepali literature (Thapa, this volume).

Finely crafted translations in a deeply *Nepali* English would still be accessible to few, indeed genuinely accessible to even fewer within Nepal given the deep grasp of a language needed to appreciate texts that stretch its reach, devise neologisms, experiment at the boundaries of its possibilities. In this sense what we would surely count, in literary terms, as better translations, can only compound the dilemma she describes, of engaging in the furtherance of a language of privilege. Which returns us directly to the issue of cross-translation among Nepal's other languages, work that already takes place under conditions generally considerably more difficult than those of English translation from Nepali (or even Nepal Bhasa), however "marginalized" the latter may be on a world scale. Contemplate a situation in which Nepali literature, through its translation, were to achieve a place comparable to that of, say, Bengali, Czech, or Urdu in the world literatures scene. What might be the effect on cross-translation between Nepali languages? Perhaps, at best, none, but it seems far more likely it would further marginalize such efforts. At least without conscious intervention.

"What", as Ṭhapa asks, "is the English translator to do"? Neither giving up on English translation, which is to give up on making a rich literary tradition available to a great number of people worldwide, nor striving for mediocrity so as not to overshadow translation into and from the less dominant languages of Nepal seem like desirable solutions. But neither does ignoring this effect strike me as possible in a world of *ethical* translation. When we acknowledge the act of literary translation to be also an act of cultural translation, a moment's contemplation of the social terrain tells us that Nepali is the dominant national language and that English, as Thapa says, "occupies a startlingly privileged position"

Viewed from this angle we can say that translation from dominance into startling privilege, however well it may be done, clearly does not exhaust the responsibilities of an ethical translator. I suggest that there are several ways to address this problem besides sticking our heads in the sand.

The first, least satisfactory solution, but one that holds its own significance, is to also engage in translation into English from other languages besides Nepali. Nepal Bhasa is thus far the only language that has received any sustained attention of this kind.[4] In some cases the potential body of work for translation is very small (itself no argument against translation), but in others such as Maithili, Bhojpuri and Limbu, that is not the case. Though not every translator will have the requisite linguistic skills to take up this option, there is the possibility of collaborative work. Moreover, a growing body of literature from other languages of Nepal is being translated into Nepali. Such works are easy to find in the many "*janajāti*" magazines in the market. There are also collections of translations appearing.[5] Thus there is also the possibility of second-order translation, work that presents its own special difficulties and almost demands collaborative translation.

I see two kinds of significance to such work. First, just as the politics of the Nepali literature that is translated makes a cumulative impression in English, so too does overwhelmingly *Nepali* translation. It says: Nepal is the land of Nepali speakers, its literature *is* Nepali literature. We all know this is both true and not true–that it is also the land of speakers of

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4 The bibliography published here does not willfully ignore translations from other languages of Nepal. Except for one or two cases (e.g. Lal 1995 under Poetry in Periodicals) we simply did not find literary translations from other languages into English. While there may be some, they are evidently few. Where one will find translations from other languages is in the Folklore and Oral Literature section. The significance of this fact is reflected upon below.

5 See, for example, Acharya (2053 v.s.) for translations into Nepali of Bhojpuri stories, Kainla (2049 v.s.:173-213) for Limbu stories and poems translated by Bairagi Kainla. The journal *Sayapatrī*, which publishes each piece in both Nepali and another language of Nepal according to subject matter (one or the other being a translation) is also a good source. See, for example, the story by Rameshkumar Tamang, in both Nepali and Tamang (Tamang 2053v.s.ka,kha), Phurumbo and Tamling (2052ka,kha) for folktales in both Limbu and Nepali, and the striking example of translation from one 'Nepali' into another–a Baitadi Nepali story (Sijapati 2052v.s.ka,kha). There also exist older works, such as I.M. Chemjong's translation of the main Limbu sacred text into Nepali (Chemjong, 1961).

many other tongues, the home of other literatures. But do readers of Nepal's literature in translation know that *from the work they read?* Second, in the context of Nepal's language politics, a Magar language poem say, or a Bantawa story travels a much longer and more arduous path to arrive into English translation. Precisely due to the status of English in Nepal today, such translations could have a counter-hegemonic effect rather than the hegemonic effect that is the tendency of translation from Nepali into English.

The second kind of (partial) solution to the dilemma of the English translator that I propose here leaves behind English altogether. Consider the case of translation into Nepali[6] from other languages of Nepal. For English translators with the linguistic capability, simply to engage in such translation is an evident avenue of action. For those without such capability (and for anyone the number of languages would be limited), there is always the possibility of collaboration. Nor can the ethical translator retire before the fact by saying they wouldn't know where to begin. One good place would be the dual language state-of-literature articles being published in the journal *Sayapatrī* on the literatures of other languages of Nepal.[7] Such guides are also to be found in Nepali in *janajāti* magazines, and in various other publications.[8] Resources like these provide but a starting point, but then such work is also only at its beginning.

A further step along this road would be for English translators to devote some of their effort to translation from Nepali into other languages of Nepal. For the need for circulation in both directions is equally pressing. Both these endeavors that leave English aside present evident and

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6 Or translation into Nepal Bhasa. I do not know what, if any translation *into* Nepal Bhasa may be taking place. The possibilities proposed here would, however, apply equally to that case.

7 See for example, Magar (2052v.s.ka, kha) and Pokhrel (2053v.s.ka,kha) on Magar literature, Sharma (2052v.s.ka,kha) on Bhojpuri literature; Premarshi (2052v.s.ka,kha) on Maithili literature. Some articles take one further, like the discussion of the language of husband-wife exchanges in Maithili which draws upon three Maithili plays for its material (Yadav 2052v.s.ka,kha). There are also visual possibilities, like the Tamu *pye* painted on the walls and pillars of the Pokhara museum in the headquarters of the *Tamu Pye Lhu Sangh* in Nepali/English and Chō Kyui.

8 See for example, Kainla (2049 v.s.: 117-170) for a bibliography of the contents of Limbu language journals and magazines (1987-1991) in which contents are distinguished by genre; Acharya (2053 v.s.) for a discussion of Bhojpuri prose literature.

new challenges, the greatest of them linguistic. The hierarchy of languages in Nepal will not be overturned by our scattered acts of translation, yet here and there a preconception or two may be–not least of them our own. For it seems inevitable that in the course of such work the English translator's relation to Nepal–whatever it may be at the outset–would be altered, and altered in the direction of making her a more nuanced translator of Nepali language literature as well.

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मगर, हर्षवहादुर वुडा । २०५२ख । मगर भाषौ अवस्था ड प्रपाशनो स्थिति । (सामग्री सूचीवीना २०५२क को मगर अनुवाद), हर्षवहादुर वुडा मगर, अनु. । *सयपत्री* १(३): १०५-११२ ।

यादव, रामावतार । २०५२क । साँय-वहुमे गप्पसप्प कोना करी : महेन्द्र मलंगियाक नाटकक सन्दर्भमे । *सयपत्री* १(२): १३१-१४२ ।

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शर्मा, विश्वम्भर कुमार । २०५२ख । नेपालमा भोजपूरी साहित्यको स्थिति । गोपाल ठाकुर, अनु. । *सयपत्री* १।१): ११३-११८ ।

सिजापति, रामविक्रम । २०५२क । तिमीले मलाई चिनेनौ ? *सयपत्री* १(३): ७९-८२ ।

सिजापति, रामविक्रम । २०५२ख । तुइले मुइलाइ नाइ पछ्यापे ? (२०५२क को वैतडेली भाषिका अनुवाद), रामविक्रम सिजापति, अनु.। *सयपत्री* १(३): ८३-८६ ।

The Reference Bibliography: Organization and Contents

As far as possible the name of the translator(s) is included in each entry. Dates given are the date of publication of the translation, not the original work. In almost every case the entry is under the name of the author of the original work. The few exceptions are translations printed within volumes that are original works by another author. Original titles are given in square brackets only where the work under translation would not be discernible from the title of the translation. Where the original work was available to us at the time of compilation and it seemed useful, parenthetical notes about contents have been added. Where possible, forthcoming translations are included. The bibliography is divided into six sections. Contents and rationale of each section are as follows:

I. ***Novels, Plays, Anthologies, Edited Volumes*:** This section is primarily composed of translations that form (singly or collectively) a complete volume in themselves. It also includes a few edited volumes and other works that contain a text in translation. Both poetry and short stories, except for those in periodicals, are found in this section. Some also include writing about literature and have a double entry in Section VI.

II. ***Poetry in Periodicals:*** Poems are given separate entries except those translated by the same person(s) and appearing on consecutive pages. A few poems that appeared in *The Nepal Digest,* an on-line publication are included.

III. ***Short Stories in Periodicals.***

IV. ***Plays, Essays and Excerpts from Novels...*:** This is, in a sense, the miscellany section of works that did not fit elsewhere. For readers of the bibliography, this may however, prove informative. Plays in periodicals appear here only because so few have been published that they didn't warrant a separate section. Although *nibandha* is a vital genre

within Nepali literature, we found few essays in translation. Similarly, biographies of literary figures do not appear to be garnering translation.

V. ***Folklore, Tales, Oral Literature...*****:** This section introduces another stream of translation and is intended to juxtapose "high literature" and folk. There are several reasons for its inclusion: i) a good deal of the material translated is from languages other than Nepali, ii) translation in the folktales genre tends to the extreme end of free translation while much of the oral literature is translated by anthropologists for distinctly illustrative purposes (though there are exceptions to this). The styles of both should be worth reflecting on in comparison with literary translation, and iii) the material itself stands in sharp contrast to that of much of the translated literary work and thus brings out other story-telling voices of Nepal. Some works that contain only minor amounts of direct translation (even none in a few cases) are included for the reflections they contain on the nature of oral literature or the task of translating it. Besides folk and oral literature, translations of religious texts are also included in this section, along with a small amount of material on music.

VI. ***Writings about Literature*****:** This section is almost wholly comprised of pieces originally written in English. It represents, if you like, the English literary criticism of Nepali literature. However, older writings are distinctly underrepresented. We intend to publish a supplement in the future. This section can be approached with the same kinds of questions in mind as those posed in the preceding introduction with regard to translations.

I. Novels, Plays, Anthologies, Edited Volumes (Short Stores; Poetry) in English Translation[9]

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9 When using this bibliography it should be recalled that all dates are the date of publication of the translation, not the original work.

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10 Includes poems by Lekhnath Paudyal, Balkrishna Sama, Lakshmiprasad Devkota, Siddhicharan Shrestha, Kedar Man 'Vyathit', Gopalprasad Rimal, Mohan Koirala, Bairagi Kainla, Parijat, Bhupi Sherchan, Banira Giri, Bhairava Aryal, Haribhatkta Katuwal, Ishwar Ballabh, Hem Hamal, Krishnabhushan Bal, Bimal Nibha, Ashesh Malla, Minbahadur Bista, and Avinash Shrestha. Short stories by Guruprasad Mainali, B.P. Koirala, Bhavani Bhikshu, Shivkumar Rai, Daulat Bikram Bista, Bijay Malla, Ramesh Bikal, Shankar Lamichhane, Indra Bahadur Rai, Poshan Pande, Tarini Prasad Koirala, Prema Shah, Parashu Pradhan, Drubha Chandra Gautam, Manu Brajaki, and Kishor Pahadi.

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11 Includes 75 poems by 15 poets: Laxmi Prasad Devkota, Kedarman Vyathit, Gopal Prasad Rimal, Mohan Koirala, Hari Bhakta Katuwal, Bhupi Sherchan, Basu Shashi, Bairagi Kainla, Krishna Bhakta Shrestha, Banira Giri, Manjul, Krishnabhushan Bal, Vishnu Vibhu Ghimire, Ashesh Malla, and Dinesh Adhikari.

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12 For bibliographic purposes these three poems constitute a reprint from *Journal of South Asian Literature* 31/32 (1996/7). In practice however, that volume is going to press in early 2000, hence the poems were first published in *Nepal Letters.*

13 Ramesh Bikal appears as Ramesh Vikal in Section I. In general one commonly encounters the following variations in transliteration in some occurrences of certain nagri letters: b/v; v/w; ksh/x; u/oo; i/ee; hri/ri; au/ou; i/y; sh/s, m/n.

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14 In this section some works are listed that may include only a small amount of translation. They are included because they should be informative for anyone thinking about how oral literature enters into the world of writing. The section may thus be taken as a combined guide to translations and to writings about folklore, music, etc. It should, however, be understood to be a small selection in the latter category. Although this bibliography is limited to translations into English, we wish to bring to notice one (of few) translations into other languages discovered in the course of its preparation– a small collection of Nepali folktales in Vietnamese translation: Thu Thuy. 1985. *Bà già trong qua bâu: truyên cô Nê-pan.* Series: Truyên cô thê giói chon loc. Hà Nôi : Kim ‹ông.

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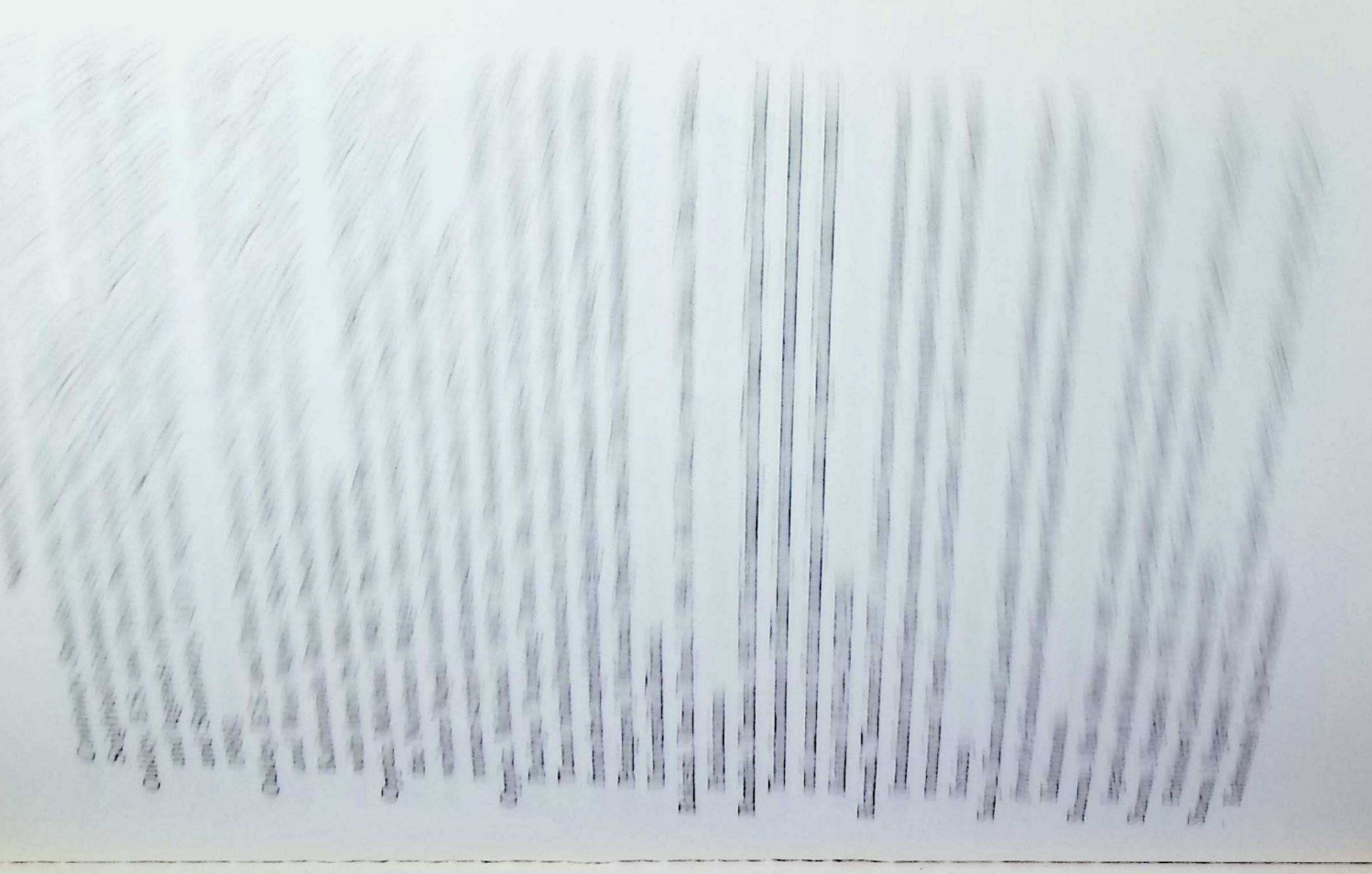

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Notes for Contributors

Studies in Nepali History and Society provides an interdisciplinary forum for original research. The journal aims to further understanding of cultural politics and social conditions in Nepal through a commitment to historical analysis, attention to Nepali scholarship, and a willingness to explore new terrain. Detailed studies from any discipline are invited. All papers must have a substantive focus on Nepal, but comparative work is also welcome.

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The body text of all submissions should be double-spaced with one-inch margins. Footnotes should be formatted as such (i.e., not as endnotes), single-spaced and numbered consecutively throughout the text. Bibliography should follow the body text, be single-spaced, and continue the pagination of the article. Use 8 1/2 x 11 or A4 paper. Provide title and author information, including address, on a separate title page. Repeat article title at the top of each page of the manuscript, justified with the left margin, and page numbers justified with the right margin.

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> "It is indeed strange that many foreign scholars continue to produce accounts and studies of Nepali society without having read anything written by members of that society in their own national language. One can barely imagine a similar situation in reverse" (Hutt 1994:84).

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> The most comprehensive guide to Nepali biography and autobiography (Pradhan 2044 v.s.) describes over one hundred and fifty works published through the mid-1980's.

Bibliographic Format

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Malla, Kamal P. 1979. *Road to Nowhere.* Kathmandu: Sajha Prakashan.

Allen, Michael, ed. 1994. *Anthropology of Nepal: Peoples, Problems and Processes.* Kathmandu: Mandala Book Point.

Pindali, Keshab Raj. 2025 v.s. Khai Khai! In *Sājhā Nibandha.* Bhairab Aryal, ed., pp. 24-31. Kathmandu: Sajha Prakashan.

Bikal, Ramesh. 2048 v.s. [2019 v.s.]. Subedār Raṇe Buḍho. In *Nayā Saḍakko Gīt*, pp. 88-99. 5th ed. Kathmandu: Sajha Prakashan.

Pandey, Bikash. 1995. Because it is There: Foreign Money, Foreign Advice and Arun III. *Himal* 8(4): 29-35.

Onta, Pratyoush and Mary Des Chene. 1995. Whither Scholarship on Nepal in the Nineties? *Contributions to Nepalese Studies* 22(2): 213-223.

Dhungel, Yogesh. 1994. The One-Window System and Company Registration. Center for Institutional Reform and the Informal Sector. Unpublished ms.

Joshi, Bikas. 1996. On Structural Adjustment (and Poverty of Reasoning). *The Kathmandu Post,* 23 January, p. 6.

Deshantar Saptahik. 2053 v.s. Bambaibāṭa Pharkāiekā 60 Pratiśatmā H.I.V.! 27 Sāun, pp. 1, 8.

Kantipur. 1995. An advertisement for the film *Saḍak.* 29 April, p. 8.

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